University of Alberta

Anglican Sermons, 1700-1750

by

Douglas E. Lewis ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Department of English

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall 2001

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled Anglican Sermons, 1700-1750 submitted by Douglas E. Lewis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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To Veronica Lewis

and

In Memoriam

Corriene Lewis 1915 – 1998

Abstract

This thesis argues that sermons from the first half of the eighteenth century should be readmitted into the literary canon and shows how they may be studied as literary texts. Chapter 1 gives an overview. Chapter 2 draws on evidence from the whole of the eighteenth century to show contemporary attitudes toward the sermon, and delineates the changes which led to its exclusion from the canon. This chapter also defines the homiletic genre and explains how it fits into the field. Chapter 3 gives an account of the unique characteristics, requirements, and expectations of that genre, focussing on three clusters of topics: subjects, purposes, and types; audience; orality and print. The concluding chapter engages in practical criticism on representative sermons by two neglected representatives of the era, Joseph Butler and Thomas Sherlock.

Acknowledgements

It is a pleasure to acknowledge Dr Robert Merrett's part in this thesis. It took a long time to grow out of a paper for his course, but he never gave up on it or on me. His critiques, suggestions, and advice were always pertinent, as pointed as necessary, but never personal. I emerged from each conversation we had with new ideas, better ways of expressing the ideas I had, and a clearer sense of the purpose and significance of what I was doing. He should be given a full share of the credit for whatever contributions the following pages make to the study of English literature; the flaws and errors in them remain my own.

The staffs of the English Dept. and the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research at the University of Alberta were unfailingly courteous and helpful. The directors of the T. S. Rendall library at Prairie Bible College supplied a steady flow of ILL books and articles, a necessity when research is carried out so far from the resources a university library provides.

What I owe to my wife is incalculable. Her never-failing help, encouragement, and support kept me afloat at many points where I must otherwise have gone under. The extent of my debt is indicated by her acceptance of this thesis, with its faults and deficiencies, as a sufficient reward. Our three daughters could not fully understand what I was working on, but were always sympathetic and cooperative. If they ever consider following in their father's footsteps, I would like to assure them that there are no bad puns in eighteenth-century sermons.

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CHAPTER 1—INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

This thesis had its beginnings when I edited a selection from Hugh Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric and Belle Lettres for a graduate seminar. I had never looked into it before, so I was surprised to find a series of lectures on oratory occupying the middle section of the book, between lectures on style and those on the history of literature, and having, so its place implied, a natural connection with both of them. More surprising was the inclusion of a lecture devoted to the 'Eloquence of the Pulpit'; and then, immediately following it, I found Blair giving a detailed 'Critical Examination' of one of Atterbury's sermons in the same spirit, and employing many of the same criteria, as his earlier 'Critical Examination' of papers from the Spectator. Present-day handbooks of rhetoric and of literature would never treat a sermon seriously, whether it were by Billy Graham or the Archbishop of Canterbury, so I started looking for an explanation of this phenomenon. What I was able to infer, instead, was that most scholars and critics would be as surprised as I was. Everyone who mentioned sermons agreed that they were important in eighteenth-century society, but almost no one was willing to talk about them as oratory and literature at any length. James Gray published a book on Johnson's sermons in 1972, but took care to make a sharp distinction between his and all others: 'They are … the unique productions of a great mind' (230). In addition, there are Francoise Deconinck-Brossard's narrowly-focussed historical study (1984), Rolf Lessenich's inquiry into eighteenth-century homiletical theory (1972), and James Downey's survey of six famous preachers (1969); then, making a long stretch back, there are W.F. Mitchell's and Caroline Richardson's works on sermons in the preceding age (1932 and 1928, respectively); aside from these and a scattering of journal articles, the field is blank.

Faced with this neglect, it seemed to me that there was room for something which should be neither homiletical theory nor a survey of individual preachers, but, rather, an attempt to lay a foundation for the study and interpretation of the genre as a whole. Considering the universally acknowledged importance of sermons for understanding eighteenth-century literature and culture, such a study should be useful at any time. It is particularly useful now, when more and more scholars lack a background in institutional Christianity, which makes it more difficult for them to understand sermons—whether encountered on their own or in the pages, of, say, Tristram Shandy—and almost impossible for them to imagine the experience which lies behind the printed texts.

The following chapters lay such a foundation. Chapter 2 opens up space on the critical map for the consideration of eighteenth-century sermons as literature. I attribute the neglect of sermons to prejudice; after offering reasons for such prejudice and noting its effects, I turn to what the age itself had to say about its own homiletical productions. I then account for the relative scarcity of eighteenth-century critical theory connecting sermons with literature, and analyze such evidence as there is to show that the equation 'sermon equals literature' operated at the level of assumption rather than proof. The end of the chapter discusses a number of ways in which the knowledgeable use of sermons can enrich our understanding of eighteenth-century (and later) literature.

Once sermons have been placed on the eighteenth-century literary map, the next question becomes, How is this genre to be approached? What are its characteristics, requirements, and expectations? What background information is needed to study it properly? The field is so large and so little known that an adequate prolegomenon would fill a book. Chapter 3 indicates what might be done by exploring three separate but interconnected topics: the multiple aims and types of sermons; the nature and expectations of the audience for these discourses, both spoken and written; and the circumstances of orality, 'writtenness', and publication, both as they exert pressure upon the preacher and as his responses affect the direction and intensity of the pressure.

This information supplies a background for the reading, enjoyment, and analysis of actual sermons. Chapter 4 examines representative sermons of two Anglican divines, the bulk of whose work was produced in the first half of the eighteenth century: Joseph Butler, philosopher and bishop of Bristol and Durham, and Thomas Sherlock, successively bishop of Bangor, Salisbury, and London, and one of the most celebrated preachers of the age. Its most important aim is to express and, if possible, impart some of the varied kinds of pleasure that may be found in this genre.

The conclusion gives a brief summary of the previous chapters and extrapolates from them as well. The thousands of sermons published in the first half of the century alone offer a huge field of interest; I point out directions further investigations might profitably take and indicate the larger unexplored areas.

The maps of explorers who reenter a forgotten country are neither exhaustive nor minutely accurate. They will include the most noticeable topographical formations, and small areas may be charted in detail. They will also include wrong bearings and distances; lakes, mountains, swamps, and other prominent features will be missed; and huge tracts will still be *terra incognita*. So it is with this thesis. Since there is little recent research in the field, what the following pages discuss is provisional. My report is one of sightings, rough sketches, tentative plotting, along with confirmation, correction, and extension of earlier reports. In many areas, it is limited to showing later expeditions where to look and what to look for.

There are other limits as well. Sermons have points of contact with a number of other fields in religious studies; to keep this thesis within reasonable bounds, I had to exclude matters of theology (systematic, historical, pastoral, and practical), hermeneutics, and biblical criticism.[1] For the same reason, little space is given to homiletical theory,[2] and the homiletical literature cited is usually of the orthodox Anglican type. The majority of sermons published within the eighteenth century fall within this category, and probably the majority of unpublished ones too (see Deconinck 'Eighteenth-Century' 107-09).[3] Dissenting sermons conformed more closely to a single standard than they had in the preceding century[4]—the standard established by Tillotson and other Anglican preachers and homileticians[5]—but congregational demographics, differences in the form and structure of divine service, training facilities and standards, church organization, doctrine, and the social and political framework into which sermons fit—all introduce a number of complications which could not be addressed in a project of this scope.[6] Later in the century, distinctions multiply and blur as a result of the work of Whitefield and Wesley, which shades into the 'Evangelical revival', and the movement toward Unitarianism by what Donald Davie has called 'Old Dissent' along with certain parties in the Established Church.

It is quite possible to view religion—and institutional religions such as Christianity in particular—mainly as an instrument of power, control, and oppression; to see its vertical aspects as a justification for its horizontal aspects.[7] Sermons would then be analyzed and interpreted as instruments of social control. For the purposes of this thesis, however, I view religion as a potential meeting ground between man and God. In this scheme, the genre of sermons has a *prima facie* case for being taken seriously and at face value, to the extent of analyzing and interpreting them as documents that are heavily influenced but not wholly determined by cultural and societal structures, customs, habits, and mores. It is not a contradiction to this principle to admit that some sermons may be constructed and used for the indirect imposition of social control; but that is not admitted for the genre. Such an approach does not militate either for or against the consideration of sermons as literature.

I have called this study Anglican Sermons, 1700-1750, but the evidence in chapters 2 and 3 draws on the whole century—even the 'long century', since some exhibits come from the era of Tillotson or the years leading up to the Reform Bill. This was a deliberate choice. Lessenich claims that the theory of homiletics was static from 1660 to 1800, but the practice 'was constantly improved upon', so that 'by the time of Blair, Porteous, and Alison,' the 'sermons of the early period … had become old-fashioned and inimitable in style' (xi). However, when we find Woodforde preaching a truncated version of Tillotson again and again up to the eve of the nineteenth century, we can see that this latter assertion needs to be challenged. From this and other indications, it seems clear that certain kinds of preaching and certain almost-universal conceptions of the sermon, its place and its purposes, held throughout the period. Thus the use of materials from a greater time-span than the title includes. On the other hand, it seemed useful to concentrate on the shorter period in the chapter on individual preachers. Donne and Andrewes need no introduction, although the interest in them has dropped off precipitously in recent years. Barrow, South, and Tillotson are more often mentioned than examined, but they are still names with a certain tang. On the other side, Whitefield and Wesley have received a great deal of a different kind of attention—focussing particularly or exclusively on their doctrines and evangelistic methods. But the period from Tillotson's posthumous collection to the ascendancy of the two W's is the Death Valley of sermons. Few go there, and most of those who do have just one desire—to get to the other side. The preachers of this era—Atterbury, Butler, Jortin, Secker, Seed, Sherlock—are mere names, vaguely remembered from Boswell's Life and other such sources, but as flavourless as the names of Bible books to someone who has never looked into them.[8] They are thought of as anemic followers in Tillotson's train; and then along came Wesley and, especially, Whitefield, and obliterated it. Chapter 4 will show them to be undeserving of such ignominy; but there is a lot of preliminary spadework to be done before we excavate them.

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[1] Students who are interested may consult such sources as Frei.

[2] It has been treated exhaustively and rather rigidly by Rolf Lessenich; see also Mitchell and Lenz.

[3] Furthermore, by far the greatest number of Englishmen who listened to sermons listened to Anglican ones; in 1770—30 years after the start of the Methodist 'Revival'—only 'about ½ million out of 7 million in England and Wales' were non-Anglicans (Clark 89); cf. Clark 137.

[4] This standard comprehended style, structure, and, in some cases, content. J. C. D. Clark notes a Dissenting sermon on George III's accession which quotes arguments from Thomas Sherlock (217)—imagine John Owen using a quotation from Robert South! Also, v. Deconinck 'Churches' 253.

[5] The establishment of this standard is one of Mitchell's themes; see his summary, 401-02.

[6] The only published attempt to address these differences is Deconinck, 'Stylistic'.

[7] See Hooker, Laws V.ii.2-4, esp. the first sentence of section 3: 'For a politic use of religion they see there is, and by it they would also gather that religion itself is a mere politic device, forged purposely to serve that use.'

[8] Butler *is* remembered by the philosophers, but by no one else.

CHAPTER 2—THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY SERMON AND THE LITERARY MAP

I. Why the Sermon is Omitted from the Map.

Almost seventy years ago Norman Sykes deplored the prejudice of historians against the eighteenth-century church: 'Even students of widely separated centuries turn aside from the exposition of their proper theme to fling a congenial barb at the baseness of the Hanoverian age' (Church 2); and again, after quoting Gibbon on 'the imperial patronage of religion in the age of the Antonines': 'Unhappily the eighteenth-century Church has won no greater measure of approval in its more specifically religious character' (3); his final comment is an illustration of 'the vigour of the ecclesiastical revulsion' (4-5). More than thirty years later, Donald Greene echoed the charge:

> The history of religion in the eighteenth century generally—not merely in England—has received scandalous treatment at the hands of the historians of that century, and I do not think that we can feel much confidence that we possess any sound general knowledge of the history of the century's life and culture until some of the neglect and distortion has been repaired. To document this charge is all too easy ... (297)

(In the same year, George Rude's history of eighteenth-century London repeated the same old criticisms: 'So it may be argued that in London, as elsewhere, the laxity in building churches was but one reflection of the comfortable, placid, and unhurried attitude towards religion that was predominant among the leisured classes of Hanoverian England. For there were greater abuses within the Church than a lack of seating ...' 104.) Then, in 1985, J. C. D. Clark noted 'the polemical denigration ... of the Church as somehow both somnolent or ineffectual, and the advance guard of modern rationalism' (165). The commonly-received interpretation of the Church is that it was the ecclesiastical equivalent of the unreformed State: straitjacketed by tradition, torpid, corrupt, complacent, unspiritual, unresponsive to the needs of its constituents, hopelessly out of touch with changing conditions, desperately needing revival but completely unaware of its need—in short, dead and mummified. As G. R. Cragg put it, summarizing the opening of Mark Pattison's famous essay a hundred years before, 'The Hanoverian age was content with an unheroic temper. Its predominant interests were commercial … Its rulers were opportunists … Though England prospered, the counterpart of material gain was spiritual loss' (Church 117-18).

One would hope to find that the revisionary temper of recent decades would lead to a reappraisal of this period.[1] Linda Colley attempts it in Forging a Nation, exploring 'the centrality of Protestantism to British religious experience' and to Britons' sense of a national community 'in the 1700s' (18), but her account is equally repulsive, although on different grounds. The British viewed 'time past' as 'a soap opera written by God' (18); their Protestantism 'represented … paranoid thuggishness' (23); it fostered a sense of community by defining Roman Catholicism as 'the Other', thus creating opportunities for both 'Official' and 'mass intolerance' based on 'fear' (7); it required the 'unprivileging of minorities who would not conform'; but most of all, 'this way of viewing the world fostered and relied on war' (53).

A natural consequence of such views is historians' contempt for eighteenth-century sermons. A Church that was so deadly dull or jingoistic would inevitably reproduce its views in its public discourses. Thus Pattison, for example: 'the classical sermons of the eighteenth century … are complained of as cold and barren. From this accusation they cannot be vindicated' (65). A little later, Leslie Stephen characterizes 'The study of eighteenth-century sermons' as 'not exhilarating'; most of them are 'dull, duller, dullest' (qtd. Lenz 109). In the present century, typical examples might include Cragg ('Worship was pedestrian and preaching prosaic' Church 133) and Rude ('Sermons … were cold and uninspiring' 105). Recent scholars repeat the same charges: Bernd Lenz writes that 'In practice … the most striking feature of sermons seems to have been their dullness as Stephen's verdict … suggested. Sermons obviously had the effect of sleeping potions' (114). Christine d'Haussy, one of a group of French scholars showing renewed interest in the sermon, quotes John Chandos on the post-Restoration sermon—'in style as passionless as it was polite, it gradually became a conventional decoration of the orthodox Church of England Sunday'—and applies it to 'eighteenth century sermons[,] which were generally sedate and unemotional in manner' (29). She goes on to make the familiar charge that 'preachers were preoccupied with morals and taught little else'(30).[2]

Such prejudice leads to neglect or distortion. The standard ecclesiastical history is Gordon Rupp's Religion in England 1688-1791. In over 500 pages of text, roughly two-and-a-half are devoted to homiletical theory and practice.[3] Although references to sermons are everywhere in the book, most of them illustrate or explain doctrinal and controverted points, i.e. they are considered simply as textual evidence of the same kind and at the same level as pastoral charges and pamphlets. Colley devotes a couple of pages to the 'new availability of print' (40-43), and notes that 'religious works formed easily the bulk of what every British printing press was producing in this period' (41). However, sermons get the barest mention (42).[4] But the most startling example of prejudice combined with neglect and distortion comes from A. Tindal Hart, who, after quoting S. C. Carpenter, 'The congregation liked to have a sermon, and did not share Dr Johnson's admirable custom of preferring to go to church when there were prayers only' (76), claims that 'Congregations might insist upon a sermon, but it was commonly long, dull, and completely over their heads' (78). What kind of people could possibly *demand* to be bored?

So far I have dealt with historians of one kind or another.[5] Since different disciplines need not agree in their judgments, we cannot assume that literary scholars will view this body of sermons in the same way. But in fact we do find remarkable agreement; the same biases appear to operate, with only a variation in shading—they appear reluctant to discuss the sermons at all. Aside from the sources mentioned in chapter 1 *supra*, there are few references to sermons in any critical discussion of eighteenth-century literature. Where they do occur, they usually follow the lines of Murray Roston's dismissal in Prophet and Poet: The Bible and the Growth of Romanticism.

> Thomas Sherlock, the Bishop of London, declared in 1727 in connection with the slave trade that 'Christianity and the embracing of the Gospel does not make the slightest difference in civil property'—a remarkable statement when one recalls the detailed laws of civil property in the Old Testament, if not in the Gospels. Then again, he explains the acceptance of Christianity in the crudest gambling terms, on the grounds that it is ten to one religion is true, so that if the believer is proved wrong he has lost only one-tenth of the stake, whereas the sinner, if proved wrong has lost far more.
>
> Could one wonder that audiences were not inspired by such preaching? (99-100; Sherlock quotation from J. E. V. Crofts, *Eighteenth Century Literature: An Oxford Miscellany* [Oxford, 1909])[6]

Or, succinctly, from Paul Kent Alkon's *Samuel Johnson and Moral Discipline*: 'Johnson's best works, though deeply religious, avoid falling into the dreariness of the typically homiletic' (xii). There are different manifestations of the same spirit in David B. Morris's *The Religious Sublime: Christian Poetry and Critical Tradition in 18th-Century England* and Carey McIntosh's *The Evolution of English Prose, 1700-1800: Style, Politeness, and Print Culture*. The former treats the relations between the sermon and the religious poem superficially and in passing (199-201; 203-04, 206-07).[7] The latter, a comprehensive work on changes in prose style and correlative changes in social contexts, ignores sermons: there are only two significant references for the whole century (36, 165).

Why is there such indifference or hostility to the eighteenth-century sermon? I suggest four reasons. First, later generations make the mistake of approaching this genre in this century with notions and expectations that have been formed by later movements in Protestant Christianity, such as Tractarianism and, especially, Evangelicalism. The former gave its peculiar flavour to the whole High Church wing, and people raised in it look for a heavy stress on ceremony, tradition, and form, with the result that, as one Edwardian church historian laments, eighteenth-century sermons 'leave the general impression that the Church system was very imperfectly carried out. Scarcely one can be found which presents fully the round of Fast and Festival from Advent to Advent, and comparatively few which dwell distinctly on the different seasons of the Church' (Overton and Relton 295). From the Evangelical side, the beleaguered preacher faces claims that he dispensed 'cold pulpit moralities' and is warned (too late) that

> The more observant and zealous of the Clergy could not fail to learn a valuable lesson from the wonderful power over the souls of men which their Methodist fellow workmen—the irregulars of the Church—had acquired. And independently of their example, the same leaven was working among those sharers in the Evangelical revival who remained steadfast to the Established order … There were many mannerisms, and there was much want of breadth of thought, but in heart and purpose [these sermons were] a true preaching of the Gospel. (Abbey and Overton 1878 2: 493)

'True preaching of the Gospel', 'simplicity of the Gospel', 'separation from the world', 'concern for the souls of men'—with the force given them by the Evangelicals, such phrases and ideas are powerful moulders of thought; and Evangelicalism, a trans-denominational movement committed to such informal doctrines as the incomparable superiority of a sincere heart over a learned mind or a correct vocabulary,[8] was an immensely powerful influence in North American and English culture throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth. As the grip of these informal doctrines on the sermon tightens, they lead from Wesley—'celebrated' for 'economy of statement' and 'logical development' (Downey 103)—down through Spurgeon to Billy Graham and the edifying but unprintable discourses many of us grew up with. Erik Routley's dictum can be applied widely: 'Preaching gradually developed … out of the pattern of patient and formal exposition into the pattern of red-hot exhortation and dramatic religious demagoguery', or its many unliterary correlatives (qtd. in Davie 60). It is probable that a large percentage of the generation of scholars just past or passing were raised in Evangelical homes; their entire upbringing would be against any sympathetic reception of sermons that are polished, urbane, unemotional, 'this-worldly' (in the sense of preparing parishioners to go back to their ordinary lives in the coming week).

'Just past or passing'—we are entering a time in which fewer and fewer scholars have a memory of Christianity; perhaps very few of those who are in their thirties and early forties even attended Sunday School as a child. Here is a second reason. In a few years many scholars will have no knowledge of the Bible or Christian beliefs, allusions, habits, and institutions. Christianity will become as foreign, as 'academic', as Greek mythology (perhaps more, for the latter is kept alive—if this can be called a life—in Disney movies and Archie comics). Colley's book furnishes examples of this ignorance getting into print. The first section on the relation between Protestantism and British patriotism is headed 'The Struggles of God's Elect,' although it does not deal with predestination or Calvinism, and despite the fact that Anglicanism in the eighteenth century is, on the whole, unCalvinistic. Further on she identifies Ammon at the time of David as an ally of the Assyrians (30-31), which is like identifying the Norway of Ibsen's time as an ally of Nazi Germany. Such ignorance is not a sign of lack of intelligence or intellectual curiosity. At this level of learning, however, it is a sign of a post-Christian society, and also of a resultant assumption that knowledge of the Christian system is an unimportant tool in the scholar's kit. This tells against the consideration of all sermons; as I demonstrate below, early eighteenth-century sermons suffer especially severely because they lack the verbal pyrotechnics of those from some other periods.

A third reason is that certain developments in the larger society are inimical to pulpit oratory as a whole. James Downey mentions two: first, 'during the second half of the nineteenth century, the Church began to lose its place at the centre of intellectual and social activity,' with the result that 'the sermon was stripped of much of its former power and influence' (2). As Downey puts it,

> In an age of mass media, compulsory education, professional men of letters, highly-specialized entertainments, and the ubiquitous paperback, many former functions of the pulpit have been taken over by other agencies. Its sole raison d'etre is now religious; and

> even as a means of spiritual enlightentment its authority has been weakened and its sphere of influence restricted. (1)[9]

He also points to 'a decline in' the power and reputation 'of oratory generally.' '"Dirtied by political dictators, sullied with the taint of glib hypocrisy, and linked with herd-psychology", oratory in the twentieth century has fallen into disrepute and "rhetorical" become a disparaging term' (1; quotation from H. Davies, Varieties of English Preaching 1900-1960 [1963] 21). This distrust found a natural ally in the Evangelical belief that a sincere heart is far better than—and often the enemy of—an educated tongue. Their alliance was lethal to prose style in the sermon, especially since heart over tongue became a shibboleth of Victorian society. By the middle of the twentieth century, popular and respected manuals of homiletics were dispensing such advice as the following:

> If a minister wishes to make everything in a sermon clear, he must feel sure about the goal, and then have a sense of direction ... Current practice calls for paragraphs of about a hundred words, perhaps a little more. If the units of thought run much over a hundred words, the work may seem heavy ... Each paragraph may start with a key sentence, clear and crisp ... Keep *most of the sentences short* ... Gossip feels free at times to use ones that run beyond a hundred words, whereas [Rudolph] Flesch recommends an average of about seventeen. The best wisdom of our day calls for prose sentences shorter than those of yesterday, but still not choppy ... Within each sentence *watch the sequence of ideas* by keeping your eye on the ball ... We might go on to think about clarity in the use of words, but we turn to human interest, only to find it more important and more difficult to attain ... (Blackwood 184-87)

The alternation between cliched generalities and reliance upon fussy mathematical formulas suggests that the writer has no theory of oratorical style to fall back on, while the informal, even slangy tone hints at an uneasy subliminal desire to eliminate the distance between speaker and listener. The excerpt he singles out for ecstatic comment does have a strongly rhetorical construction, but can hardly help sounding like the exemplar of 'glib hypocrisy', folksy appeal, and empty-headed rhetoric: 'Come then to Christ, who alone can save you from the sin that destroys and defiles your manhood. Come then to Christ, who alone can make you good men and true, living in the power of an endless life. Come then to Christ, that you may have fellowship with him, and realize all it means to be a man' (189; the sermon was by Henry Van Dyke).

Very different examples illustrating the same trend can be found in Billy Graham's volume of sermons delivered at Madison Square Garden in 1969. In outline, Graham's sermons are like Bishop Sherlock's: a scripture text, a detailed explanation of it (often divided into a series of points), an application, and a hortatory conclusion. But the anti-oratorical bias of Graham's speaking style shows up everywhere: in the jokes he tells to put the audience at ease, in the use of newspaper stories and statistics to liven up and drive home his points, even in his way of talking about himself: 'So I started preaching and I prepared four sermons and I thought that each sermon would last about an hour. And I preached my first sermon in a small church in northern Florida. About thirty people were present. And I was so frightened and so scared that I preached all four sermons in eight minutes' (Graham 18).

This excerpt also shows how the anti-oratorical bias can affect the printed form of sermons. Publication does not now require the preacher to polish and correct his style. In contrast to Whitefield, who was incensed by grammatical and syntactical roughnesses in a supposedly verbatim printing of one of his sermons ('you have made me speak false concord'—qtd. Downey 5), Graham says, 'This book contains, with only minor editing, the ten sermons just as they were given. No attempt has been made to make them what they are not—literary masterpieces ... It is impossible to capture the rapport, the camaraderies, and the banter of oral delivery between speaker and audience' (Graham ix-x).

With the decline of oratory in power and reputation comes a corresponding decline in its importance in public life and in the Church. In ministerial training homiletics now has to vie for attention with courses in church organization and finances, management, psychology and counselling, and other subjects that seminaries value highly (McMurtrie).[10] Sermon audiences, in turn, have learned not to expect what they will not get. Most congregations do not have the formal or informal training in rhetoric that those in former centuries could not have avoided, and it does not occur to them that sermons from another era, or under other cultural conditions, could be different. The idea of the sermon as a highly effective cultural force is dead; the most devout scholars today limit their expectations of it to narrowly religious ends.[11]

The fourth reason brings the focus back to eighteenth-century sermons. If we do manage to neutralize the influence of reasons one, two, and three, we approach them with stylistic expectations formed by their far more famous predecessors.

> [T]hat this God at last, should let this soule goe away, as a smoake, as a vapour, as a bubble, and that then this soule cannot be a smoake, nor a vapour, nor a bubble, but must lie in darknesse, as long as the Lord of light is light itself, and never a sparke of that light reach to my soule; What Tophet is not Paradise ..., what torment is not a marriage bed to this damnation, to be secluded eternally, eternally, eternally from the sight of God? (Donne 244)

I have not read all the sermons the eighteenth century produced, but I dare say nothing in them is like that. What Blair's lecture singles out for praise seems insipid after it:

> And what a Return then do we make for the Blessings we have received? and how despightfully do we treat the Gospel of Christ, to which we owe that clear Light even of Reason and Nature which we now enjoy, when we endeavour to set up Reason and Nature in opposition to it? Ought the withered Hand, which Christ has restored and made whole, to be lifted up against him? or should the dumb Man's Tongue, just loosened from the Bonds of Silence, blaspheme the Power that set it Free? (Sherlock Discourses 1.14-15; see Blair 2.116)

And no wonder: a taste accustomed to the rough exuberance of the first cannot sense the true quality of the diction, syntax, rhythm in the second. But this *is* a prejudice. No word in Sherlock is out of place; the tone is carefully regulated at a level just above the conversational; his questions, with that careful deferral imposed by the additional clauses in the second sentence, build up to images that are short and unelaborated but very effective. Blair might have been referring to these images when he said that 'By a well chosen Figure, even conviction is assisted, and the impression of a truth upon the mind, made more lively and forcible than it would otherwise be ... An image that presents so much congruity between a moral and a sensible idea, serves like an argument from analogy, to enforce what the author asserts, and to induce belief' (1.288).

These four reasons might as well be called 'prejudices.' Each creates a predisposition against eighteenth-century sermons. The first operates on scholars from a Christian background; the second on scholars from a non-Christian background; the third and fourth on both. (They also show that prejudices against sermons in general and against eighteenth-century sermons inform and interpenetrate each other in ways which often make separation of the two unprofitable or impossible.) None stands up to rational analysis; the mere process of explaining them should help the scholarly imagination move beyond them.[12]

But these prejudices did not always hold sway. Sermons were deleted from the literary map by a dual process—the definition of literature as a discrete field of study, coinciding with the triumph of a restrictive theory of art.

II. How the Sermon Disappeared from the Map.

Words like 'literature' are defined by a dictionary, but also by the corollary social process of institutionalizing the pursuit to which they refer. Raymond Williams gives a history of the verbal definition:

> Literature came into English, from C14, in the sense of polite learning through reading ... Thus a man of literature, or of letters, meant what we would now describe as a man of wide reading ... But [by the sixteenth century] the general sense of 'polite learning',

firmly attached to the idea of printed books, was laying the basis of later specialization … [T]he first certain signs of a general change in meaning are from C18. Literary was extended … from mC18 to refer to the practice and profession of writing: 'literary merit' (Goldsmith, 1759); 'literary reputation' (Johnson, 1773) … Where Johnson had used literature in the sense of being highly literate in his Life of Milton, in his Life of Cowley he wrote, in the newly objective sense: 'an author whose pregnancy of imagination and elegance of language have deservedly set him high in the ranks of literature'. (His Dictionary definition was 'learning, skill in letters'.) Yet literature and literary, in these new senses, still referred to the whole body of books and writing; or if a distinction was made it was in terms of falling below the level of polite learning rather than of particular kinds of writing … All works within the orbit of polite learning came to be described as literature and all such interests and practices as literary …

What has then to be traced is the attempted and often successful specialization of literature to certain kinds of writing. This is difficult just because it is incomplete; a literary editor or a literary supplement still deals generally with all kinds of books. But there has been a specialization to a sense which is sometimes emphasized (because of the remaining uncertainty) in phrases like creative literature and imaginative literature … In relation to the past, literature is still a relatively general word: Carlyle and Ruskin, for example, who did not write novels or poems or plays, belong to English Literature. But there has been a steady distinction and separation of other kinds of writing—philosophy, essays, history, and so on—which may or may not possess literary merit or be of literary interest (meaning that 'in addition to' their intrinsic interest as philosophy or history or whatever they are 'well written') but which are not now normally described as literature, which may be understood as well-written books but which is even more clearly understood as well-written books of an *imaginative* or *creative* kind. The teaching of English, especially in universities, is understood as the teaching of literature, meaning

> mainly poems and plays and novels; other kinds of 'serious' writing are described as *general* or *discursive* ... Clearly the major shift represented by the modern complex of literature, *art, aesthetic, creative* and *imaginative* is a matter of social and cultural history. (Williams 184-86)[13]

It is clear that in the last three centuries 'literature' is a word in the process of moving from one predominant meaning ('polite learning') to another ('imaginative' or 'creative works', specifically fiction and poetry). The move will never be complete as long as the older definition is found useful (e.g. 'search of the literature', an indispensable phrase in the social sciences). Nevertheless, it is clear, too, that the later meaning had risen to the top by the latter part of the nineteenth century, so that in 1874 Richard Greene could write: 'The full glory of the new literature broke on England with Edmund Spenser', and not have anyone suppose that he was aspersing the learning of earlier Elizabethans (OED sense #3). Yet this is not enough to explain why sermons from the preceding period are not considered literature in the modern sense.[14] In fact, Vicesimus Knox's Elegant Extracts in Prose—one of the most famous literary anthologies for many years on both sides of the turn of the century—does just that. Selections from the Spectator and the Idler are joined in its pages by Blair, Seed, Sterne, and Sherlock (vol. 1 passim). But the exclusionary process must have begun shortly afterward; certainly by the beginning of the twentieth century sermons had disappeared.

We are looking for more than Williams can give us: the 'social and cultural history' he hints at. We have the phenomenon—the narrowing down of the 'canon'—but not an explanation. Fortunately, one would think, recent scholarship has focussed on the creation and institutionalization of 'literature'. Yet such sources as Court, Crawford, and Ross do not give the explanation we need. Ross ('Emergence') is fascinated by the creation and circulation of 'cultural capital', but the kind of capital represented by sermons escapes his attention. Crawford wishes to show how and why the Scots 'invented' English literature. His brief treatment of Blair includes a couple of sentences on the 'Critical Examinations' in which that author 'subjects essays from the *Spectator* and passages from Swift to minute scrutiny. One senses that, from the given examples, a canon is developing of writers who are approved for their proper English style' (34). There is no mention of Blair's parallel treatment of Atterbury. Court, who appears to be the most promising, turns out to be the greatest disappointment, because his interest is tracing the relations between literature as aesthetically autonomous and literature as a socially and politically embedded construct. The chronological overview in his introduction mentions Puritanism (seventeenth century), the Anglican church and dissenting academies (late seventeenth, early eighteenth century)—and that is all (11-12). Thereafter literature apparently becomes a secular field, but the change is neither described nor explained. So too in his text: hints about the religious content of early curricula and lectures aren't followed up. Thus he comments on 'The [late eighteenth-century] movement away from the authority of the aristocracy and the church' (29) but does not consider its consequences for the scope of the canon. Blair comes in for extended but unsatisfactory treatment (30-38). The 'critically detailed examination' of the Spectator essays gets attention; Atterbury and what he stands for gets none. In fact, the whole set of lectures on oratory rates only three sentences, despite the fact that 'the published text of the Lectures ... was the core text for the teaching of English in universities throughout the next century' (38). When Court moves on to the establishment of London's University College, he notes that for Lord Henry Brougham, one of the founders, 'as well as for many other early nineteenth-century progressives,' literature 'was still understood in the pre-Romantic sense as anything of value written well. Critical essays, letters, travel accounts, scientific tracts, biographies, histories, and so on, counted in his literary library alongside Shakespeare, Milton, and more traditional selections' (52). Sermons are omitted—whether by Brougham or Court, we cannot be sure. The latter does spend some time on the Reverend Thomas Dale, first appointee to the 'Professorship of English Language and Literature' (53). His course on literature included 'theological writings' in its 'discussion of prose forms' (58). But Dale soon left, and we are not told what became of the theological content of his lectures.

Well, then, how *did* eighteenth-century sermons became pariahs in the society of literary forms? I offer two conjectural explanations as a pointer to future research. One is obvious: the increasing secularization in the society as a whole. Donald Greene estimates that 90% of the population in England attended church weekly in the 1700s (299); by 1851, the figure was probably below 50% (Currie et al. 216-18, Wrigley and Schofield 588).[15] This growing indifference to religion[16] led to unfamiliarity with the sermon, whether as a literary composition or a religious exercise. Working in tandem with it was a more interesting cause: the revolution in the philosophical theory of art which led to what M. H. Abrams calls 'art-as-such' ('Art' 138).

In his most succinct discussion of this change, Abrams argues that before the emergence of 'art-as-such', there was no comprehensive theory of what we would today call 'the arts'.

> Theorists of the various arts ... whatever their divergences, had assumed the maker's stance toward a work of art, and had analyzed its attributes in terms of a construction model. That is, they posited a poem or any other work of art to be an *opus*, a thing that is made according to a *techne* or *ars*, that is, a craft ... the patent differences between the materials and practical skills of a poet, a painter, a sculptor, a musician, or an architect would keep these diverse occupations and products from being classified together in any systematic fashion, and for other than limited purposes. The critical undertaking, consequently, was to deal with a single art ... ('Art' 137)

Theories of 'art-as-such' furnish a complete contrast: they

> ... tacitly presuppose not the maker's stance to his work in process but the perceiver's stance to the finished product, and they formulate their discussion not on a construction model but on a contemplation model. That is, they assume that the paradigmatic situation, in defining and analyzing art, is that in which a lone perceiver confronts an isolated work, however it happens to get made, and simply attends to the features that it manifests to his exclusive attention. ('Art' 138)

The consequences of this revolution could hardly have been more disastrous for the sermon as literature. Abrams identifies three main claims of 'art-as-such' theories:

> 1) 'Art' is used as a term interchangeable with 'the fine arts,' which consist primarily of five arts: poetry (or literature), painting, sculpture, music, and architecture. The consideration of these essentially related products constitutes an area of inquiry which is *sui generis*.
>
> 2) What defines a work of art is its status as an object to be 'contemplated,' and contemplated 'disinterestedly'—that is, attended to 'as such,' for its own sake, without regard to the personal interests or the possessiveness or the desires of the perceiver, and without reference to its truth or its utility or its morality. A work of art may or may not be true to the world or serve practical ends or have moral effects, but such considerations are held to be supervenient upon (or, in some views, destructive of) the defining experience—that is, the absorbed and disinterested contemplation of the product for itself, simply as a work of art.
>
> 3) A work of art is accordingly described as an object that is self-sufficient, autonomous, independent. It is asserted to be an end in itself, not a means to an external end, and its artistic value is said to be intrinsic, not extrinsic, to its own being. The work, in other words, is conceived as an entirety that exists simply in order to be looked at or read or listened to with an absorbed, exclusive, and disinterested attention. ('Art' 135-36)

All three claims militate against the inclusion of sermons in any literary canon. By making literature *sui generis*, claim no. 1 forces sermons to desert any recognizable homiletical theory if they wish to become 'literary.' Claim no. 2 is worse. It invalidates the whole idea of the sermon as a communal kind of discourse—something that a group of people united by a common allegiance hear and respond to together. Just as important, it destroys the basis of the sermon—a shared morality and a moral purpose. And it does so explicitly: the 'defining experience' of the work of literature cannot, and should not, be made congruent with whatever moral scheme is inherent in it, or any moral effects it may be intended to produce. But without reference to 'its truth or ... morality' the sermon ceases to exist. And there is still more. The work of art is to be contemplated 'without regard to the personal interests or the possessiveness or the desires of the perceiver'; yet it is these sorts of things that the sermon is addressed to—the interests of the audience in those fundamental spiritual questions which affect them personally. Finally, claim no. 3 forces the sermon to deny those connections which are one of its distinctive features. The dearth of sermons that are published without being preached tells us that the form is not independent. Chapter 3 describes relations between the spoken and printed sermon; here it is important to stress that sermons are part of a service, and that in the Anglican church they occupy a fixed place in a liturgy, i.e. a coherent, integrated whole. And the point of the whole is not experience, but reference—a pointing finger to things beyond the service, whether the doctrines of salvation or the duties of a man toward his neighbours. In short, the sermon is a means to an external end.

Thus, this theory, by its recategorizing of literature and its redefinition of the literary experience, is skewed against the inclusion of the sermonic form (along with histories, philosophical treatises, political pamphlets, &c.). It is more strongly skewed against the sermon than against other forms by its rigid exclusion of moral considerations. Abrams rightly recognizes its limitations, saying that

> For some kinds of works, this way of talking is relatively adequate. But if we turn to King Lear, or Bach's St. Matthew's Passion, or the frescoes of Michelangelo (still, happily, in their original situation in the Sistine Chapel) ... the view of art-as-such, while it remains pertinent, becomes woefully inadequate. We need to substitute a different perspective ... to begin to do justice to the diverse ends and functions of such works ... ('Art' 158)

What makes the exclusionary application of this doctrine persuasive is the time period Abrams posits for the emergence of 'art-as-such': the eighteenth century, the very time in which 'literature' began to develop a specialized meaning. Its beginnings date to the end of the first decade, in the writings of Joseph Addison and of the third Earl of Shaftesbury; eighty years later, it had developed into the full modern formulation of 'art-as-such' in Immanuel Kant's Critique of Aesthetic Judgement ('Art' 139). These ideas were disseminated widely—and their consequences worked out in detail—during the first half of the nineteenth century, the era in which the homiletic form disappears from the literary landscape.

To summarize: in the early definition and institutionalization of literature, sermons were viable candidates for inclusion. Under the combined pressure of increasing secularization and 'art-as-such',[17] the form loses its status and is relegated beyond the margins. Since the point of crystallization for this process is somewhere in the early to mid-nineteenth century, eighteenth-century sermons in particular are excluded, getting caught up in the Victorian reaction against the whole eighteenth-century church.[18] From that point on, these factors and the prejudices enumerated earlier work together and reinforce each other.

The theory of 'art-as-such' has received vigorous challenges in the last thirty years, but the mutually supportive nature of the historical processes and the four prejudices means that little space can be made available for the sermon in anthologies, curricula, or theory. For twentieth-century scholarship, the definition of literature excludes sermons; thus the idea that sermons merit literary investigation simply doesn't surface. On the other hand, prejudices against the sermon reinforce the definition, doubly insulating sermons from consideration.

III. Why the Sermon Should be Reinscribed on the Map.

The explanation of prejudices and processes must be preliminary to a positive theory. This section makes a case, based on aggregated evidence, for putting sermons back on the literary map. I begin with testimony to the usefulness and pleasure of the sermons heard and read in our period.

We tend to overlook the evidence we have because it is based on the assumption that sermons are interwoven into ordinary life to a degree unknown today. One example: Boswell, seeking authority for 'the minuteness on some occasions of my detail of Johnson's conversation', finds it in the quotation of a paragraph from Secker (1: 10-11). No comment is made on the choice; none, apparently, is needed; we read it and pass on to the next quotation (from Bacon). What biographer of the twentieth century would stoop to illustrate and defend his method from a contemporary sermon? Evidence of this sort is abundant.

If it were not, the statistical evidence alone would be overwhelming. In 1783, John Cooke's The Preacher's Assistant catalogued every published sermon he could find between 1660 and 1782.[19] The total number of volumes was about 9,000; the number of sermons was around 25,000 (Spaulding xi). This yields a yearly average of 70 plus volumes containing about 200 sermons. In 1992, a French researcher found '21,398 records with sermon titles' in the ESTC database (Deconinck 'Eighteenth' 106). The larger number would include successive editions and some editions may have been recorded more than once.[20] Nevertheless, it is clear that, as Thomas Preston remarks,[21] 'sermons dominated religious publishing from the Restoration to the middle of the eighteenth century' (98),[22] and there are no indications that sermons became less popular, or had a harder time getting into print, later in the century. Religious publishing was a prolific and important part of the publishing industry (Preston 98-99). (In fact, 'In the first half of the eighteenth century, the most valuable copyrights appearing in the trade-sale catalogues can be divided into two major classes: religious works, and dictionaries' [Belanger 16].) As Vicesimus Knox observed in 1779, 'of no books in the English language has there been so unceasing a succession, as sermons' ('On Preaching' 163). A genre which was so popular with book publishers must have been equally popular with the public they catered to; the public which bought so many of them would not do it for show, but for the pleasure and profit they expected to find in them; the long-continued popularity of sermons attests that their expectations were fulfilled.[23]

But we are not left at the mercy of statistics. A number of remarks and incidents throughout our period show the popularity of the form. There is a sermon preached at Queen

Mary's funeral: 'she was the first of all the Kings and Queens that sate upon the British throne, who appointed afternoon sermons to be preached every Sunday at their chapel in Whitehall, which she was pleased to honour and countenance with her royal presence' (qtd. Whitaker 24). For the ranks immediately below royalty, Addison relates that 'the Lady Lizard, in the space of one summer, furnished a gallery with chairs and couches of her own and her daughters' working; and at the same time heard all doctor Tillotson's sermons twice over. It was always the custom for one of the young ladies to read, while the others are at work ...' (The Guardian 207). Legg quotes The World, no. 184, July 8, 1756, which speaks of 'The fine lady of fashion ... who attends the sermon every Sunday' as a well-known type (Legg 101). A little lower on the scale, we have the evidence of Ralph Thoresby, a country gentleman, in his diary (January 1709):

> Went to Mr. Stretton's meeting-place, but he not preaching, by reason of age and the extremity of the season, with Alderman Milner to the cathedral of St. Pauls'; ... To hear Dr. Burgess, who, though he had some pleasant passages, which profane wits might sport with, yet preached very well. He preached above three hours, yet seemingly without weariness to himself or auditory.

On a Sunday afternoon in February,

> I heard an excellent sermon at St. Clement's but the Church (blessed be God for so happy a sight) was so crowded with attentive hearers, that I could scarce get so far into an alley at any of the doors as to hear distinctly. (Qtd. in Whitaker 45-46)

Dissenters (in the North at least) also enjoyed Anglican sermons in this period. 'At the Visitation of his diocese in 1703 by Dr William Nicholson, Bishop of Carlisle, he found at Ravenstondale a Saint's-Bell, and the Bishop was told that "this Bell used to be rung in the Conclusion of the Nicene Creed; to call in Dissenters to Sermon"' (Legg 190).

At the other end of the scale from Queen Mary is the testimony of the Visitation Returns, showing that in rural churches 'a service without a sermon was of little interest to the parishioners', as a twentieth-century scholar puts it (Vivian Barrie, quoted d'Haussy 44). Along the same line, Boswell records that Johnson 'said, he went more frequently to church when there were prayers only, than when there was also a sermon, as the people required more an example for the one than the other; it being much easier for them to hear a sermon, than to keep their minds on prayer' (1: 426).

Boswell's biography assembles a good deal of evidence showing how sermons were interwoven in representative ways into an eighteenth-century life. Volume 1: 14-15, quoting a letter from 'Miss Mary Adye, at Lichfield':

> When Dr Sacheverel was at Lichfield, Johnson was not quite three years old. My grandfather Hammond observed him at the cathedral perched upon his father's shoulder, listening and gaping at the much celebrated preacher. Mr. Hammond asked Mr. Johnson how he could possibly think of bringing such an infant to church and in the midst of so great a crowd. He answered, because it was impossible to keep him at home ...

Volume 1: 233-34:

> Reynolds and he were at this time the guests of Dr. Mudge, the celebrated surgeon ... here Johnson formed an acquaintance with Dr Mudge's father, that very eminent divine, the Revered Zachariah Mudge, Prebendary of Exeter, who was idolised in the west, both because of his excellence as a preacher and the uniform propriety of his private conduct.

In volume 2: 69, Boswell relates that Reverend Hugh Blair submitted his first volume of sermons to Strahan, and after a while received a letter 'discouraging the publication.' When Johnson got the manuscript, however, he wrote that 'I have read over Dr. Blair's first sermon with more than approbation; to say it is good, is to say too little.' Consequently Strahan agreed 'to purchase the volume, for which he and Mr. Cadell gave one hundred pounds. The sale was so rapid and extensive, and the approbation of the public so high,' that by the time Blair submitted his third volume to them he had been paid a total of six hundred pounds. More quotations could be piled up. Sermons supply topics of discussion, are sent as gifts, are quoted to support or dispute points in arguments, and so on. Excerpts furnish footnote material, and famous preachers are introduced familiarly into conversation at almost any point. Sermons were a large part of the cultural life of the eighteenth century.

Sermons were influential as well as popular. They whiled away the time for many people in the same way as a mystery might do today, but they did a number of other things too. A couple of examples will give an idea of the range of their power. The first comes from Fielding's Amelia (1751). Booth, the hero, has a good heart, but is, as his faithful wife fears, 'little better than an atheist' (2: 214). At the end of the novel, he is brought to confess his errors and amend his ways—by a book of sermons:

> 'Since I have been in this wretched place I have employed my time almost entirely in reading over a series of sermons which are contained in that book (meaning Dr. Barrow's works, which then lay on the table before him) in proof of the Christian religion; and so good an effect have they had upon me, that I shall, I believe, be the better man for them as long as I live … If ever an angel might be thought to guide the pen of a writer, surely the pen of that great and good man had such an assistant.' (2: 287)

This is the climax of the book, because it assures the reader that Booth will no longer follow the courses which brought him to poverty, and that he will live the rest of his time in harmony of mind with his Christian spouse. The argument of the whole book hinges on the reader's acquaintance with—and intellectual respect for—Barrow's sermons.

Two more examples come from public life at opposite ends of the century. The Bangorian controversy (c. 1717-18) concerned the external forms and institutions of Christianity. Although it produced literature 'so extensive … that historians have been deterred from tackling it' (Clark 30; cf. Legg 8-9), the disputed points were doctrinal, and it should not have affected, say, the enterprising, self-reliant, individualistic man of business, with his wholehearted concentration on matters of commerce. Yet '[w]hen the controversy was at its height the excitement in the City was so great that it is said business was at a standstill' (Legg 9, citing Leslie Stephen, History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century [1902] 2. 156).

In 1793, during the excitement caused by the French Revolution, Bishop Horsley preached before the House of Lords at Westminster Abbey. The Lords had grave matters on their minds, but 'the whole assembly, stirred by his peroration, rose as with one impulse, and remained standing till the sermon ended' (Abbey & Overton 1878 2: 494, citing A. P. Stanley, Historical Memorials Of Westminster Abbey, 535).

Such illustrations could be multiplied many times over. When we move on to specifically literary criticism, however, the stream becomes a trickle. Theoretical work was done on the sermon qua sermon, but there is no body of theory or criticism explicitly identifying sermons as a species of literature. Even a plain passage like the following must be used with caution:

> Mr Beauclerk's great library was this season sold in London by auction. Mr Wilkes said, he wondered to find in it such a numerous collection of sermons: seeming to think it strange that a gentleman of Mr. Beauclerk's character in the gay world, should have chosen to have many compositions of that kind. JOHNSON. 'Why, Sir, you are to consider that sermons make a considerable branch of English literature; so that a library must be very imperfect if it has not a numerous collection of sermons ...' (Boswell 2: 388-89)

It seems conclusive; yet we cannot be sure that what Johnson means is 'literature' in the newer sense. He could use it in either sense; we know, too, that at the time of the Dictionary he was conscious only of the older one. Thus the support this quotation gives to an attempt to comprehend sermons within the modern definition of literature is ambiguous. The same could be said for most other eighteenth-century quotations linking the two. It is only in the 1790s, with the newer meaning of 'literature' emerging, that Vicesimus Knox speaks of 'the celebrated writers of sermons, whose compositions, considered only as pieces of fine literature, deserve a place in every fine library' (Personal 272).

And no wonder, when we consider the inchoate nature of literature, both as a subject and as a term defining that subject. With an evolving subject and term, and most critical theory devoted to poetry in the pre-'art-as-such' taxonomy, it is useless to ask whether the eighteenth century regarded sermons as 'literature'. We are forced to formulate more indirect questions: are there connections between sermons and the kinds of genres we now call literature? Do eighteenth-century commentators ask what we would now call literary-critical questions, and display literary-critical concerns, when they talk about sermons? The quotations from Blair and Knox give us hints, but we need to answer such questions directly.

The comparison of eighteenth-century sermons with specifically literary genres—the moral essay most commonly—yields a number of parallels. Rolf Lessenich notes that the preacher pursues the same ends as the essayist:

> The neoclassic sermon, it has already been shown, was practical in intention, aiming at the improvement of morals in society … The moralist, Samuel Johnson brilliantly argued in one of his best known periodical essays, should not lose confidence merely because he has perceived no visible moral improvement in men, but rather increase his production to the utmost of his creative power:
>
> > Books of morality are daily written, yet its influence is still little in the world; so the ground is annually plowed, and yet multitudes are in want of bread. But, surely, neither the labours of the moralist nor of the husbandman are vain: let them for awhile neglect their tasks, and their usefulness will be known; the wickedness that is now frequent would become universal, the bread that is now scarce would wholly fail. (The Adventurer, 137 [26-2-1754], in The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, New Haven and London [1958—] 2: 489)
>
> Eighteenth-century authors wrote periodical essays with an industry and moral zeal similar to that with which they composed sermons, one of the many points of contact

> between the two literary genera. (162)

This point has been confirmed in Johnson's own practice by Paul Alkon, studying his moral essays, and James Gray, studying his sermons. In his preface, Alkon says that Johnson 'attempted to breathe moral instruction into all his works in the effort to make them (as he made the Rambler) "exactly conformable to the precepts of Christianity, without any accommodation to the licentiousness and levity of the present age"' (x).

Even a 'purely' literary work like the Lives of the Poets was written, as the author's diary shows, with the hope that it might 'tend to the promotion of Piety' (qtd. Alkon x). Literature, taking a page from the homiletical book, was also intended to serve the ends of devotion and morality.

Gray agrees that Johnson saw the aims of the moral essayist and the preacher as congruent. After quoting the Dictionary definition of 'moralist', he writes that Johnson 'conceived the role of the preacher in similar terms: the preacher expounds and interprets the great truths of Christian morality, using as his raw material the experiences of life, and drawing from them the lessons already placed before us in the scriptures' (162).

There is no reason to restrict this similarity to one author. A number of the Spectators are explicitly or implicitly homiletical in their aims. To take an example at random, no. 294, on charity schools, does not read like a charity sermon. Yet it is designed to awaken the same sense of obligation and lead to the same ends. First the writer invokes a sense of common humanity in those who are blessed with means to support the schools:

> There is no Doubt but the proper Use of Riches implies that a Man should exert all the good Qualities imaginable … It is indeed the greatest Insolence imaginable, in a Creature who would feel the Extremes of Thirst and Hunger if he did not prevent his Appetites before they call upon him, to be so forgetful of the common Necessity of humane Nature as never to cast an Eye upon the Poor and Needy. (Addison and Steele 3: 47)

Then he moves them to act:

> Would you do a handsome thing without Return? Do it for an Infant that is not sensible of the Obligation: Would you do it for the publick Good? Do it for one who will be an honest Artificer: Would you do it for the Sake of Heaven? Give it to one who shall be instructed in the Worship of Him for whose Sake you gave it. (3: 49)

The number concludes with 'an handsome paragraph of Dr. *Snape's* Sermon on these charities' (50).

Nor should parallels be restricted to the moral essay. '[T]he sermon had the function of confirming and increasing [the] practice [of virtue] ... The same purpose underlay eighteenth-century essays, novels, dramas, and poems ... In this respect, too, the English sermon of the Age of Reason was fully integrated into its literature as a whole' (Lessenich 235). This claim is too comprehensive, but it is easy to think of novel after novel, play after play, poem after poem, which had the functions Lessenich describes. He himself points out the example of Sir Walter Scott's The Heart of Midlothian (1818), at the end of which Scott says: 'This tale will not be told in vain, if it shall be found to illustrate the great truth that guilt, though it may attain temporal splendour, can never confer real happiness; that the evil consequences of our crimes long survive their commission (&c.)' (qtd. Lessenich 196).

Lastly, it is not necessary to restrict the common aims of sermons and other literature to moral instruction and exhortation. Waterland, the great controversialist, recommends sermons to young divines as the 'most entertaining of any books of divinity' (qtd. Pattison 69). A footnote in Boswell's Life sets this forth plainly:

> Mr Wilkes probably did not know that there is in an English sermon the most comprehensive and lively account of that entertaining faculty, for which he himself was so much admired. It is in Dr. Barrow's first volume, and fourteenth sermon, 'Against Foolish Talking and Jesting.' ... As it is not generally known, and may perhaps dispose some to read sermons, from which they may receive real advantage, while looking only for entertainment, I shall here subjoin it. (2: 388)

Can he really expect people to find 'entertainment' when they 'read sermons'? Although the form of the sentence is slightly ambiguous, it is not farfetched to suggest that he does. We can go farther and suggest that he expected people to be *looking* for entertainment in sermons; that it was commonly assumed to be one result of this kind of reading. The ambiguity itself tells in favour of this interpretation.[24] Of course, 'entertainment' and 'instruction' are the two traditional ends of literature (i.e. in the modern sense), and Boswell would have to be, not merely nodding, but snoring, before he could yoke them together unwittingly.

If sermons and other literary genres have the same ends, we should be able to find instances in which they treat the same subjects, use parallel approaches, and fall into recognizably similar forms. Here again, Johnson can serve as exhibit A. The introduction to his sermons in the Yale edition notes these things in its argument for his authorship of the 'Taylor collection'. In the sermons

> recur ideas and themes familiar to readers of Rasselas, the Idler, and especially the Rambler ... In Rambler 110 and Sermon 2, for example, the topic (the necessity of repentance) is analyzed into the same component parts, which are discussed in nearly the same order and with almost the same emphasis ... the same idea is seen to consist of the same elements and to bear the same emotional associations. (xxx)

There are parallels too between Johnson's essays and the sermons of others; Alkon (106-07) notes that '[i]n one respect' his warning about the dangers of the imagination in Rambler 8 is similar to a passage in South. Johnson's indebtedness to Law is more complex in that he adapts 'many of Law's ideas, both in the sermons and in the moral essays, particularly in the Rambler' (Gray 56). In Rambler 71, Johnson simply refers to the homiletical genre as a source of thoughts and arguments: 'Divines have, with great strength and ardour, shown the absurdity of delaying reformation and repentance' (qtd. Alkon 155). These examples show that, as Gray says, Johnson 'applied to their [the sermons'] composition the same care for form and method, the same attention to the rules governing the chosen art, that he devoted to other rhetorical genres' (1). The process also works in reverse:

> I was in London once when Dr. Percy returned from Northumberland, and found that he was expected to preach a Charity Sermon almost immediately; this had escaped his memory, and he said that, 'though much fatigued, he had been obliged to sit up very late to furnish out something from other discourses; but suddenly recollecting that Johnson's fourth Idler was exactly to his purpose, he had freely engrafted the greatest part of it.' (Joseph Cradock, Literary and Miscellaneous Memoirs, 1826, ed. John Bowyer Nichols, 1828, 1: 241-42; qtd. Lessenich 12)

These parallels hold for the Spectator too, as Alkon notes. Several numbers employ the same organizational methods as the sermon. In his analysis, however, the organization of what Addison—and Johnson—would call an 'essay' ('A loose sally of the mind; an irregular indigested piece; not a regular and orderly composition'—Dictionary, qtd. Alkon 186) is incompatible with the organization of a sermon:

> It is certainly true, in any case, that, insofar as the heads of a discourse are made explicit so that it appears unmistakably methodical, a given paper becomes less of an *essay* as Addison understands this term and takes on an important formal characteristic of the sermon.
>
> This is not to say that in every case where Addison provides explicit topical heads he is … approaching the typical homiletic form … However, Addison does display his most striking affinities to Anglican homiletic practice in those essays whose method is made unmistakably clear by the inclusion of enumerated propositions which are then amplified. (188-89)

He departs from the essay form in those numbers which 'are written with Regularity and Method', where the thoughts are 'disposed under the proper heads' (Spectator 476, qtd. 187). Spectator no. 447 is chosen as an example. Addison announces his topic in paragraph number two, amplifies it 'in two paragraphs of explanation and example', and draws from it four 'Uses', given in enumerated heads.

This distinction is part of a larger argument intended to distance the genre of the moral essay from that of the sermon by keeping the latter beyond the pale of literature. Alkon's claim that 'Johnson's best works … avoid … the dreariness of the typically homiletic' requires him to show the inferiority of Johnson's sermons—'his least original, least subtle, and therefore least characteristic achievement' (191)—and by extension the whole genre. This objection to my hypothesis, if sustained, would destroy it. It is necessary therefore to examine his points in detail before going on to further connections between sermons and other genres. The argument stretches over a dozen pages (183-95) and becomes quite involved, but there are two main propositions on which it rests.

First, a hypothesis about form: Alkon claims that Anglican sermons 'invariably' conform to the same 'organizational archetype'. '[E]ach is constructed so that transitions from topic to topic are impossible to miss'; that is, divisions are announced at the beginning and followed faithfully in the body of the discussion. Since preachers are unable to 'conceal, and alter the method, for variety sake' (qtd. 185 from John Wilkins, Ecclesiastes: or a Discourse Concerning the Gift of Preaching … 6th ed. [1679]), Alkon implies that sermons divorce themselves from the essay and from the kind of pleasure readers would find in the essay form. Addison on method furnishes the contrast: 'When I make Choice of a Subject that has not been treated of by others, I throw together my Reflections on it without any Order or Method, so that they may appear rather in the Looseness and Freedom of an Essay, than in the regularity of a Set Discourse' (qtd. Alkon 186). Alkon comments, 'Novelty of content is thus one principle liberating a composition from the obligation to be—or at least appear to be—methodical. Moreover, it is such freedom which in Addison's view transforms a composition from some other thing into an essay' (186).

However, the distinction introduced here will not hold up. First, it would exclude a good portion of the Spectator itself from literature, for example the series of papers on Paradise Lost and the eighteen other papers that Alkon admits are 'disposed wholly or partly into enumerated heads' (189). Alkon claims that such a small number shows how 'Addison was more inclined to break away from than to rely heavily upon the formal pattern provided by the ideal Anglican sermon' (189). But 'heavily' and 'ideal' show that the critic is not sure of his ground. He is forced to conclude that 'Addison's periodical essays are more closely affiliated in form as well as in content to Anglican sermons than are those in either the Rambler or the Idler' (189). The logical conclusion would be that the Spectators are therefore less literary than the Ramblers and Idlers. Then, too, many of the remaining papers in the Spectator approach the typical sermon form, despite the lack of explicit markers for divisions and transitions. It is difficult to believe that the reader of no. 294 (discussed *supra*) would fail to notice its similarities to a charity sermon, or that he would enjoy it more because it lacks enumerated heads. The interplay between the two forms would have been one source of the pleasure moral essays and their kin could provide. Finally, Anglican preachers did *not* invariably give explicit divisions at the beginning of their sermons. Butler's 'Sermon VII' (Works 1.92-101), a powerful reflection upon the character of Balaam, does not. And this is not atypical; Sherlock for example exemplifies the variety preachers used in introducing heads and transitions.[25]

In any case, it is difficult to say why explicit divisions and transitions should *ipso facto* disqualify sermons from consideration as literature. To remedy this defect, Alkon introduces his second proposition: simple and explicit method exerted 'increasing pressure toward simplification of content' (191).[26] 'Endeavouring to achieve maximum clarity by conforming to simple, obvious, and traditional formula … would not make complication of content impossible—indeed, no one could maintain that Johnson's sermons are either simple-minded or artless—nevertheless, complicated arguments would not be thereby encouraged' (191). There are two problems with this: counter-examples are readily available, and it applies to many moral essays we include in the canon. I would like to see anyone breeze through Butler's sermons—any of them. The complexity of their subject; Butler's careful disentangling of the difficulties within it; his patient elucidation of alternatives and objections; the almost painful attention paid to modulation and qualification of claims in the most accurate terms and linguistic structures he can command—all require a degree of attention and alertness far beyond what the reader is forced to devote to a Spectator or Rambler. Butler is not a typical homiletician, but he is not separated from the rest by an impassable gulf. In fact, Alkon is probably alone in finding Anglican sermons too simple in language and treatment. Other writers complain that they are too sophisticated.[27] Sykes on Woodforde, who had no remarkably strong intellect: 'The modern reader may marvel that the understanding and endurance of the rustic hearers of Somerset and Norfolk was fortified to receive such strong meat of doctrine' ('Sermons' 105). Not that all Anglican sermons were difficult; nor were all moral essays. The Spectator and Atterbury are on a level.[28]

Thus, neither one of Alkon's propositions holds up under scrutiny. Sermons and moral essays are different, but there are numerous and significant similarities between them. This is not the only literary genre in which one can find parallels to sermons. Lessenich draws attention to a 'striking parallel' between 'Blair's sermon on a contented mind (Sermons IV.190-205; II Kings 4.13)' and 'contentedness' in Robinson Crusoe (73). However, it is obvious that the sermon will be closer to the moral essay than to fiction or poetry.[29] Family resemblances are to be expected: the sermon is the older form, and the moral essay is probably a secularization of it; their relationship is alluded to when Addison is called 'a parson in a tie-wig.'[30]

If the sermon was considered a literary species of composition, we should be able to find not just parallels with other forms, but intermixing at the borders. And so it turns out to be. One obvious kind is pointed out by Downey: the ability of eighteenth-century divines to move easily from one kind of writing to another:

> Bentley, Warburton, and Hurd distinguished themselves as literary critics; Lowth and Crabbe earned praise as poets; ... Swift and Sterne hardly need elaboration. (21; perhaps Berkeley should be added to the list of poets by virtue of his ubiquitous 'On the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America')

There are two more explicit ways in which sermons were ranged alongside other literary genres. First, there are places where they are included in literary lists or categories without distinction. Knox's Elegant Extracts and Blair's Lectures have been mentioned. More examples of anthologies which include sermons could be culled from Michael; for example, J. N., Select Lessons in Prose and Verse (Bristol, 1765; ten editions to 1807), includes extracts from Tillotson (Michael 175). Pope mentions Sherlock (II.323) and other preachers in the 1743 Dunciad; a little further on, he brackets 'Sermons' with 'Characters' and 'Essays' (II.361). Lessenich quotes Alexander Gerard in An Essay on Genius (1774): 'No two arts are more analogous than poetry and eloquence' (3). In the same vein, Addison comments on the preaching of Fleetwood, South, et al., by Sir Roger's parish priest: 'A Sermon repeated after this Manner, is like a composition by a poet in the Mouth of a graceful Actor' (Addison and Steele 1: 442).

Second, sermons get inserted into other genres. The Spectator is a storehouse of examples. Numbers 103, 294, 531, and 557 include short or extended quotations from sermons. The champion is no. 352, in which, after introducing the subject, Steele turns the rest of the essay over to Tillotson, copying directly from volume II of his works. To take one other genre, sermons are also found in novels. Amelia is by no means the only instance. Consider Tristram Shandy, book II, chapters 15-17. An entire sermon (one of Sterne's own, naturally) is reproduced, read to the company, commented on and argued over (before, during, and after the reading). It becomes an indiscerptible part of the narrative. The introduction of a sermon is not something Sterne has to work at (self-advertisement may have played a part). In The Vicar of Wakefield, we have two addresses from the Vicar's time in prison (162-64, 182-87). Both are unmistakably sermons, though they are headed by no text; one is put into its proper context in 'the service', the other is simply called an 'exhortation' (cf. Titus 2: 1, 15). Both are introduced casually and naturally, and the second one is given in full.

The sermons in both novels are taken 'straight'; that is, they lack the internal and external markers which alert us to the presence of satire or sarcasm. They are as serious as the novels in which they appear. Sermons also made their way into nineteenth-century novels, but there they are usually given a comic or strongly satiric twist, as with the unforgettable exhalations of Mr Chadband in Bleak House (v. Lerner 90-93). By this time, the sermon had subsided into a subliterary stratum. (Sterne's sermons contain numerous examples of reverse crossover: narrative imported into a homily. See Sykes Church 350 for a much less successful attempt by Woodforde.)

So far I have conducted this discussion on what one might call a 'macro' level—genre to genre. Does this contention hold true at the 'micro' level also? Is the same kind of critical attention paid to sermons that would be paid to other forms of literature? One topic in critical remarks on both was a concern for language, i.e. diction and style.[31]

Ross has noted the concern for language in connection with poetry: 'Until well into the eighteenth century, the highest praise that could be awarded a poet held that he had refined his community's or his age's language, in the sense that he had tapped new sources and varieties of eloquence and so had proven the language's beauty and versatility' (Making 8).[32] The poet has power to help determine the use of language in his time, to set norms and standards whose applicability is as wide as that of polite society. This is remarkably like the tribute a number of writers pay to the pulpit throughout the century—and completely unlike anything that could be said about its twentieth-century successor. Gilbert Burnet, writing in 1684, says that 'the Rule and Measure of Speech is generally taken from' the stage and the pulpit (indirect qt. Addison and Steele 1: 162); by 1700, he might have omitted the former. A suggestive example comes from Birch's Life of Tillotson: 'Mr. ADDISON consider'd his [Tillotson's] writings as the chief standard of our language, and accordingly mark'd the particular phrases in the sermons publish'd during his Grace's life-time, as the groundwork of an *English* dictionary, projected by that elegant writer ... ' (qtd. Lessenich 11). It is well-known that Tillotson and his contemporaries set the style for pulpit oratory in the next century, but here he is setting the style for all prose. He is the authority for the authority (v. Gordon, Ian 137), and thus the arbiter of language for polite society. His style was internalized to such a degree that it seemed to be 'natural', as Goldsmith hinted in

The Bee: 'There is nothing peculiar in the language of Archbishop Tillotson, but his manner of writing is inimitable; for one who reads him wonders why he himself did not think and speak in that very manner' (qtd. Pollard 27).[33] The common assumption that literature legislates the language and homiletics uses what it finds must be turned upside down. This should come as no surprise: the standards set for sermons in the late seventeenth century, as revealed by Mitchell, Lessenich, and others, ensured a remarkable degree of attention to and care for diction, modes of expression, and the use of language generally, in the vast majority of the sermons delivered from the 10,000 Anglican pulpits in England.

Since the pulpit had a hand in deciding what prose would look and sound like, preachers could expect to be judged on their adherence to the standards they had set. Judgments like the following are common throughout the century:

> Sharp's, Calamy's, and Blackhall's are the best models for an easy, natural, and familiar way of writing. Sprat is fine, florid and elaborate in his style, artful in his method, and not so open as the former, but harder to be imitated. Hoadly is very exact and judicious, and both his sense and his style just, close, and clear. The others are very sound, clear writers, only Scot is too swelling and pompous, and South is something too full of wit and satire, and does not always observe a decorum in his style. (Daniel Waterland, Advice to a Young Student [1730], qtd. Pattison 68-69)

No allowance is made for the fact that these men are writing sermons: the terms used, the strictures made, are what one finds in discussions of secular writers like Addison and Shaftesbury (cf. Blair). The most famous example comes from Boswell's Life:

> Sir John Pringle had expressed a wish that I would ask Dr. Johnson's opinion what were the best English sermons for style. I took an opportunity today of mentioning several to him. *Atterbury*? JOHNSON. 'Yes, Sir, one of the best.' BOSWELL. '*Tillotson*?' JOHNSON. 'Why, not now. I should not advise a preacher at this day to imitate Tillotson's style; though I don't know; I should be cautious of objecting to what has been

> applauded by so many elegant suffrages.—*South* is one of the best, if you except his peculiarities, and his violence, and sometimes coarseness of language.—*Seed* has a very fine style; but he is not very theological.—*Jortin's* sermons are very elegant.—*Sherlock's* style too is very elegant, though he has not made it his principal study.—And you may add *Smallridge*. All the latter preachers have a good style. Indeed, nobody now talks much of style: every body composes pretty well. There are no such inharmonious periods as there were a hundred years ago.' (2: 179)[34]

This passage offers a number of topics for consideration.[35] What is important here is that Johnson at two points restricts himself to considering these men as models for *preaching* style, but by the end he is talking about style in general: 'everybody composes pretty well.' Preaching is in the mainstream of prose style, and there is no reason to suppose that Johnson has wandered away from the intent of the question. Indeed, there is no reason to suppose that the question is a theological one. A layman asks the greatest authority he can think of about models for prose; the authority gives his opinion on them; all of them are preachers; nobody finds that worthy of comment.

The cumulative weight of the arguments for considering eighteenth-century sermons as literature is substantial. There are multiple connections between them and other literary genres, and the kinds of questions and concerns in critical discussions of sermons are like those in discussions of literary prose. These kinds of questions do not appear in discussions of such genres as Biblical commentaries.[36] As the newer definition of literature was emerging during the century, sermons were viable candidates for inclusion within it; they exhibited the same characteristics and responded to the same critical stimuli as other forms that would eventually be ensconced in the field. They were excluded through no fault of their own.

If we define literature as a matter of characteristics rather than hard-and-fast categories, it is reasonable to expand *our* boundaries for eighteenth-century literature to include the period's sermons. This implication has further implications. One is that the inclusion of the form calls for a re-evaluation of the networks of hierarchies, influences, and other relations which make up our mental map of eighteenth-century literature. Not that they are wrong; but they need to be adjusted, reconfigured, perhaps redesigned, to see where sermons fit within them and what effect that will have on other parts and on the whole structure. The implications spread beyond the period too. This chapter has laid out a theory of art and habits of thought which predispose us to separate Christianity in its more practical aspects—homiletics being one of them—from literature. The theory and the habits are up for reconsideration, whatever one's critical orientation.

But the most pertinent questions to be raised have to do with the period itself. McIntosh's valuable book, for example, might look very different if sermons were admitted as equally valuable witnesses with other literary texts. Such musings as: 'The only place these changes have been observed, of course, is in written texts. One wonders how "ordered" spoken English can possibly be, in any age ... The history of English, however, has never had anything but written texts to go on' &c. (235-36) could be modified in a fruitful way by investigating the relation between the printed sermons and their oral provenance. Here if anywhere the connections between 'written texts' and 'spoken English' can be laid bare by careful and sensitive exploration.

Another example. The phrase I omitted from the middle of this quotation is: 'One wonders, at least I do, how many people in 1800 really spoke as Jane Austen's heroes and heroines speak.' Donald Greene has asserted a connection between the Prayer Book service and the moments of 'the great self-revelation scenes' in Austen's novels (316); Gene Koppel has demonstrated the influence of Thomas Sherlock's sermons (in their printed form, of course) on her conception of duty (44-45). But she was the daughter and sister of clerics; we know that she was a faithful churchgoer; are Sherlock's sermons enough? '[T]he two principal Branches of Preaching,' says Swift, 'are first to tell the People what is their Duty; and then to convince them that it is so' (70). Blair provides the bridge to the novel: 'To recommend some one grace or virtue, or to inveigh against a particular vice, furnishes a subject not deficient in unity or precision; but if we confine ourselves to that virtue or vice as assuming a particular aspect, and consider it as it appears in certain characters, or affects certain situations in life, the subject becomes still more interesting' (2.110). The forty or fifty sermons Jane Austen heard each year would have affected not only the thoughts of her characters but their speech as well—topics of conversation, modes of expression, speech habits, the ways in which their thoughts are formulated and expressed.

With this last consideration we are in danger of shifting our attention to sermons as a subliterary influence. This chapter has shown, however, that sermons are not merely background material for other genres, but a part of literature—constituting their own genre, worth study in their own right. If we are to approach them in an appropriate way, we need to investigate the distinctives of the genre. Chapter 3 turns to this task.

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[1] Gibson claims that such a reappraisal has made in the last 20 years. However, an examination of his first chapter, which overviews the historiography of the eighteenth-century church, reveals that this is evident only in narrow studies—for example, of the episcopate. They have had little effect on more general histories of the period, which repeat the same well-worn charges. As Gibson laments, 'It is regrettable that two recent works [1989, 1991] have reverted to a pre-Sykesian position' (28-29).

[2] Her example is Butler, who 'started his preaching career with Fifteen Sermons on the ethics of the Gospel'.

[3] He devotes one page to Johnson's sermons.

[4] She is at pains to point out that 'In Great Britain as a whole, more than half a million copies of different kinds of almanac were sold every year, a circulation figure far in excess of very other kind of book, including the Bible ... farmers used them as guides to when to plant and harvest' (20). However, Bibles did not need to be replaced every year (nor did sermons!).

[5] Clark is an exception, in that he takes sermons seriously for what they say and as a unique vehicle for understanding the century itself; see 175-77 for a typical example.

[6] I have been unable to trace this in Sherlock's works. Perhaps the quotation should be attributed to Edmund Gibson, who actually was bishop of London in 1727 (Sherlock succeeded him in 1748).

[7] It includes the claim that 'Johnson and Boswell could spend hours debating the prose styles of particular preachers', based, apparently, on one short conversation in the Life.

[8] As well as the formal doctrines of conversion, the duty of 'witnessing', &c.

[9] Chapter 3 will examine the wide spectrum of socially important functions eighteenth-century sermons were expected to fulfil.

[10] This article also corroborates the claim that biblical literacy is decreasing, even among candidates for the ministry.

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[11] One other development is the recent emphasis—both in academic theory and in North American society as a whole—on radical personal autonomy. What people see as its antithesis is 'society', considered as a construct which limits and regulates, but without natural or legitimate authority. Personal autonomy does not make community or collective action impossible if the leaders hold the same views as all the aggregated individuals. In this sense they are not leaders at all but representatives or spokesmen, i.e. typical units whose reabsorption would not affect any qualitative change in composition or character of the mass. This model militates against a sympathetic consideration of sermons, which rely on a different theory. They require collective and largely passive openness to instruction formulated and delivered by a person whose authority is not just acknowledged, but, for the duration of the sermon, unquestioned as well. Here I am considering the sermon in its simple abstract character, as a discourse delivered to a freely-gathered congregation by a 'minister of God.' But 'radical personal autonomy' is a simple abstract concept too. The very form of the sermon, considered thus, militates against individual 'interpretation', against 'responses', 'rejoinders', 'personal preferences', and the whole set of individual choices that are contained in or implied by 'personal autonomy.' The sermon is intended to compel belief, which makes it impossible to fit into the categories required by the development I have been describing, unless one or the other is redefined. Such a definition will probably be attempted at some point by scholars; in the meantime, however, hostility or indifference is the best response sermons can hope to provoke.

[12] Recognition of these prejudices is urgently needed. Sermons are losing ground even while the canon is being opened up. Tillotson and Fussell's anthology, long the standard in literature courses, included three sermons, by Tillotson, Atterbury, and Swift. DeMaria's anthology, the latest in a line of attempts to supplant it, vastly expands the coverage given to women and subsumes a much more heterogeneous collection of documents under the rubric of 'literature'—newsbooks, radical prophecy, a pamphlet on taxation, a prospectus for an encyclopaedia, even miscellaneous trial reports from the Old Bailey—but no sermons. This despite the claim on the back cover that 'A central aim has been to represent the period in a way that would have been more recognizable to people who lived at the same time than the more conventional collection of great works of literature might do.'

[13] I have removed the bolding by which he draws attention to 'keywords'.

[14] And even into the Victorian period: why shouldn't Newman's and Pusey's university addresses make it into the anthologies alongside Carlyle and Ruskin?

[15] The total attendance at all churches in England and Wales on March 31, counting morning, afternoon, and evening services, was around 11 million; people who attended more than once were counted more than once. If we deduct 30% to allow for repeat attendance, the total is reduced to 7.7 million. Total population for England less Monmouth was 16.7 million.

[16] One result of which was the founding of the University of London.

[17] Which, as Abrams suggests in another essay, represents the secularization of an Augustinian doctrine that had its roots in Plato ('From Addison' 166-68).

[18] The only sermons which survive or get reintroduced are those which satisfy two criteria: a) they are remote in time from the so-called 'Evangelical Revival' and the movements it spawned (including those antagonistic to it); and b) they include elements which may readily be labeled 'creative' or 'imaginative'. (In addition, most are championed by some powerful critical personality, as Andrewes was by T. S. Eliot.) Both points exclude practically every sermon preached after the Restoration.

[19] 'Cooke did not attempt to list every edition in which a specific sermon was printed, but … [h]is listings included 92% of all sermons given in England, and many from Ireland and Scotland, as well as some from the colonies' (Spaulding xiii).

[20] The ESTC's listings for Sherlock's Discourses … at the Temple include multiple listings from some editions and odd volumes from others.

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[21] Relying on the research of I. W. J. Machin, 'Popular Religious Works of the Eighteenth Century: Their Vogue and Influence', Ph. D. thesis, University of London, 1939.
[22] Cf. the bookseller's dialogue with Parson Adams, quoted in Chapter 3 below.
[23] Consider another kind of statistic: Tillotson's widow was offered 2500L for his sermons shortly after his death (Steele and Addison 204). The copyright of Pope was worth twice that in the middle of the next century, but with that one exception, 'the poets generally produced financially second-rate copyrights' (Belanger 17-18). Hagstrum and Gray quote a contemporary writer as saying, 'Good sermons, warranted originals, will always fetch a price'(xxii, fn. 4).
[24] A twentieth-century scholar could hardly have written the sentence without being aware that this was not what he meant, and either explaining or recasting it.
[25] V. Lessenich 96-100.
[26] The argument is found in 191-94. Alkon's examples may be read against his assertion; he also depends upon an incorrect hypothesis of the history of the term 'essay'.
[27] Johnson does it twice in the Life. 1: 284 and, especially, 1: 390: '"He observed, that the established clergy in general did not preach plain enough; and that polished periods and glittering sentences flew over the heads of the common people ... "'
[28] Not that Alkon condemns all Anglican sermons: 'The homilies of Donne and South sufficiently demonstrate that Anglican sermons could be as artfully subtle as any other form of discourse' (191). But look at the selections from Donne and Sherlock given earlier in this chapter. Wherever the distinction between them lies, it is assuredly not in Donne's subtlety and Sherlock's lack of it.
[29] Caroline Richardson gave the formula for converting South's sermons: 'Take a dozen or more ... , behead them of their texts, cut off their extremities of perfunctory reminder that souls should be saved, and what remains is a group of essays well worth reading' (86). Later writers have quoted this to show that all sermons between 1660 and 1800 were moral essays (e.g. Smyth 160).
[30] Even the resolutely secular moralists of the age claimed that they and the devout were building upon common foundations, although they did not recognize, as Christian moralists did, that the foundations had been laid by eleven centuries of Christianity in the British Isles. 'Since the Light of the Gospel has shone throughout the World,' said Sherlock, 'Nature has been much improving' (Discourses 1: 4).
[31] There are others; Blair's Lectures are a storehouse of examples.
[32] The idea survives, in a different form, until well into the twentieth century: Lewis Abolition 29-30. Cf. also the claim, associated with the New Criticism, that poetry is a 'specialized use of language.'
[33] Dryden, too, claimed that he formed his style on Tillotson, although chronology makes it doubtful.
[34] For identification of these preachers and a discussion of this passage, see Brown 21-32.
[35] The last sentence is reminiscent of Ian Gordon's comment: 'In this period [1660-1760] it is difficult to find *any* bad prose. After 1760', he notes, 'bad prose is only too easy to find' (134). The effects of the 'Methodist (or Evangelical) Revival' on prose style in this later period have yet to be studied. V. Lenz 116-25. What effects might the 'emotionalism' in Whitefield and Wesley have had on e.g. the novel?
[36] It is important to keep some qualifications in mind. Eighteenth-century sermons are not simply a subset of literature in the modern sense. On the one hand, not all sermons in this period are literature, just as not all verse of the period is poetry. Although one can speak of a single standard to which they tried to conform, there must have been many that found their way into print without intrinsic merit. On the other, the sermon is not content to stay within neat categories. It sprawls across generic boundaries; and eighteenth-century practitioners and audiences, unlike later scholars, were comfortable with that. In one direction it blends with oratorical theory and practice; in the other, it has connections with such non-literary genera as

commentaries (cf. Deconinck 'England' 165). In the past, such connections have been influential in disqualifying sermons as literature, as though they could not be citizens of more than one country at a time. Another caveat: the student of eighteenth-century sermons must always remember that the relations between divinity and literature looked very different at that time. We find a hint of the difference in Johnson's remarks on Waller's sacred poetry:

> It has been the frequent lamentation of good men, that verse has been too little applied to the purposes of worship, and many attempts have been made to animate devotion by religious poetry; that they have very seldom attained their end is sufficiently known, and it may not be improper to enquire why they have miscarried ... Contemplative piety ... cannot be poetical. Man admitted to implore the mercy of his Creator, and plead the merits of his Redeemer, is already in a higher state than poetry can confer ... The ideas of Christian theology are too simple for eloquence, too sacred for fiction, and majestick for adornment; to recommend them by tropes and figures, is to magnify by a concave mirror the sidereal hemisphere. (Lives 1: 202-04)

Whatever belongs to the Christian religion is, in one sense, 'above' mere literature. The difference is not between entertainment and instruction, but between sacred and profane. If literary scholars do start to read sermons, they will read them as literature first and theology second; but they must never forget that a 'proper' reading of them in the eighteenth century would reverse the order.

CHAPTER 3—THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE SERMON

Although the sermon occupies a large part of the eighteenth-century landscape, so little work has been done on its characteristics that the problem is one of drafting the maps rather than learning to read them. Chapter 4 deals with individual sermons; this chapter is concerned with a different matter, the background knowledge scholars need to approach the genre intelligently. The pages that follow deal with a few topics or clusters of topics that seem most important or most in need of discussion. They are laid out in separate sections, but it should not be imagined that these sections are discrete bundles of information; they are interrelated in many ways. The subjects, purposes, and types of the sermon cannot be considered in isolation from a knowledge of its audience, which also has an effect upon style; all of these impinge upon the stages from oral delivery to print and back again. Future research will be able to map this ground in more detail and use it as a base for exploration in new directions.

I. Subjects, purposes, types.

Two scholars have drawn up classification schemes for eighteenth-century sermons. Lessenich, following Jean Claude, divides them into four 'genera': explicatory, observatory, applicative, and propositional (82-95). The criteria he uses are the type of approach to the text and the resulting structure of the discourse. This works well for his subject—homiletical theory—but a different scheme is needed to do justice to the bewildering variety of occasions, subjects, and purposes the sermon could address. Charity sermons and accession sermons,for example, might use the same approaches in serving very different purposes. Deconinck ('Eighteenth' 109-111; see Appendix A), following Sampson Letsome, divides sermons into the following categories: practical, doctrinal, political, Bible, liturgy, funeral, before Lord Mayor &c., miscellaneous, and a large slice which is unmarked—presumably those Letsome did not classify. This is more useful for us, since it recognizes that occasion and subject are valid criteria for classification. Any scheme will present difficulties, because a broad range of topics and themes was available to preachers, and because they were not usually concerned about fitting their discourses into ready-made categories (although they recognized and used Lessenich's kinds of approach).

Occasionally sermons could generate some anxiety about repetition, i.e. failing to fix attention or move to action because the audience has heard or read the same thing many times before. Thomas Sherlock told the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in 1715:

> [T]he occasion will naturally suggest to your thoughts the consideration of the encouragements and difficulties which attend this undertaking; and of the methods proper to attain this end ... but yet, since I succeed much abler men, who have gone before me in the performance of this duty, and have with greater judgment considered these necessary points ... I beg leave to decline the unequal task, and to spend the time allotted me in considering on what foot the gospel first set out [&c.] (Works 3: 343)

Subject and purpose were closely linked ideas in the mind of the preacher; a subject found in one of the lessons for the day might determine not only what he was going to preach on, but also what his aim would be,[1] while conversely, the purpose of the sermon might determine the choice of text (Deconinck 'Churches' 254-55). Taking the two together, we can fit most Anglican sermons from our period into the following classes: biblical/doctrinal, ethical/practical (in the sense of 'practical theology'), apologetical, political, and social. The scheme is not tidy or complete. The last category in particular cannot be defined too strictly without losing a large part of its content, and there is bound to be a lot of seepage between types. Sermons preached during national crises,for example, will be primarily political, but oftentimes cannot keep themselves free of economic and other kinds of social theory. Nevertheless, this typology is both accurate and useful if we keep a couple of cautions in mind.

Classification schemes serve to discriminate between things of the same basic kind. For eighteenth-century sermons, the basic kind is defined by the concern which is central to all of them. In Idler 91, Johnson classifies sermons as a whole: 'Of morality little is necessary to be said, because it is comprehended in practical divinity, and is perhaps better taught in English sermons than in any other books ancient or modern' (367). On the one hand, sermons are 'practical'; that is, they are meant to issue in human action, rather than in bare assent or in speculation. As Swift puts it, 'the two principal Branches of Preaching, are first to tell the People what is their Duty; and then to convince them that it is so' (70). The second 'branch' is not merely a proof but a motive to action; it consists in convincing the auditor 'by arguments, drawn to the Level of his Understanding, that he ought to perform it' (71). On the other, they are 'divinity'. The telling and convincing are presupposed upon a Christian foundation. This is crucial. The sermons we are classifying continually perform this balancing act between 'practical' and 'divinity'; in some types one or the other is more evident, but both are to be kept in mind. In fact, it is not so much a balance as a blend, with 'practical' the adjective and 'divinity' the noun that makes it meaningful. And it is a reasonable blend, one dictated by what the speakers could observe of life: 'In a word, a man should not live as if there were no God in the world, nor at the same time as if there were no men in it' (Addison qtd. Abbey & Overton 1878 1: 470). We may look for other things in the sermon, and we are at liberty to find them and concentrate on them, but if we forget these our mental picture of it will be seriously distorted.

One further caution is necessary. In the twentieth century, with our truncated idea of the sermon, preachers tend to introduce what we consider 'extra-religious' topics—politics,for example—either hesitantly or defiantly. The eighteenth century suffered from no such embarrassment. All the classes listed below were considered suitable for the pulpit, and none were inferior to the others. The sermon-writer expended his best efforts on all of them.

Biblical/doctrinal. In one sense all sermons were biblical: they were headed by a Bible verse, and the themes which followed were at least suggested by something in that verse. This type is set apart by concentrating on explication of a passage or exposition of a doctrine. The concern of the preacher was either the right interpretation of the text lying open before him (i.e.

applied hermeneutics), or the exploration and enforcement of an article of belief (i.e. applied theology).

Since 'doctrine' is the systematic arrangement and coordination of principles and beliefs gathered from both the whole and each part of the Scriptures when rightly explicated, biblical and doctrinal sermons sprang from the classic Anglican triad of 1) Scripture, i.e. reliance upon the text itself, 2) the hermeneutical and theological tradition, and 3) the application of reason. This did not lead to abstraction; what came out of the preacher's study was shaped by pastoral concerns—knowledge of his congregation and their needs. Nor was the aim of the sermon abstract. It was intended to lay the right foundation for thoughts, words, and actions, by reinforcing and recommending orthodoxy to its hearers.

It also served as a sort of communal cement: multiple congruent expositions of a common belief-source bound together the Christian community or organism, which was incarnated in the parish church on the local level, the Anglican Church--'England at worship'--on the national level.

Deconinck's pie chart (Appendix A) shows that 19% of Anglican sermons were 'doctrinal' and 3% belonged to a category simply called 'Bible.' We need to exercise care in using these figures, since the categories are not defined—they may not be congruent with the scheme proposed here (e.g. she has no separate category for apologetics), and the classification of particular specimens can be quite subjective. Nevertheless, they show that explication and doctrine were neither ignored nor neglected in this period. One of Atterbury's 'charity' sermons (Power) is simply an exhaustive (16 pages of extremely small type) explanation of I Peter 4: 8. Swift's sermon 'On the Trinity' (159-68) could be considered either doctrinal or apologetical, but both treatment and title imply that his central concern is the doctrine itself, and that his attack on those who oppose it is made with intent to safeguard the doctrine. Butler is considered an ethical preacher, yet one of the most striking sermons in the Rolls collection is a wide-ranging explication of a single verse of Scripture (no. 7, 'Upon the Character of Balaam'). Sherlock abounds in biblical and doctrinal discourses; The Use and Intent of Prophecy, usually considered an apologetic against Collins's Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion, is a work of wider scope, as his preface make clear:

> that the Reader may not be deceived, it is proper to tell him here, that he is not to expect an Answer to a Book lately published, entitled, Grounds & Reasons, &c ... When I entered upon the Design of forming these Discourses, it was with a view of shewing the Use and Intent of Prophecy, in the several Ages of the World, and the manifest Connexion between the Prophecies of every Age. (Use 'Preface to the Reader')

Many of his Discourses at the Temple are biblical as well. In number 26, he takes the unusual step of giving his text (Ps. 94: 10) in two versions—the usual A. V. and 'The old translation' (i.e. the Book of Common Prayer). Both are necessary for his explication of the verse, and he sticks close enough to it for a concatenation of the two versions to come in naturally at the close.

Perhaps what Deconinck calls 'Liturgy' sermons (15%; v. Appendix A) fall into the Biblical/doctrinal category as well. This would make a place for the Lenten sermons mentioned in Abbey and Overton (1878 2: 448), and those on confirmation preached by Woodforde in the autumn of 1794 (Sykes 'The Church' 33).

Ethical/practical. As all sermons are biblical, so, homiletics being a branch of practical divinity, all of them are ethical. Sermon structure included a place near the end for 'application', in which the preacher turned from an explanation of the truth found in, or suggested by, his text, to the effects such truth should have upon the lives of his auditors (cf. Lessenich 110-19). We may make this a distinct category by defining it more strictly. Ethical and practical sermons are those whose main aim was to educate hearers in general duties to God and man. They were intended to reform manners and conversation, instill virtues and eradicate vices, encourage people to examine and amend their way of living, &c. Biblical/doctrinal sermons stress orthodox belief; this category stresses orthodox practice, usually with a heavy emphasis on social practice. It is distinguished from the category of 'social' sermons because it deals with general duties, those we owe to ourselves and to our fellow-men, no matter what station we and they hold in society, and without reference to the specific relations in which we stand to them.

Butler's sermons at the Rolls illustrate some of the variety to be found within this category. Nos. 1 – 3 develop a general theory of 'Human Nature, or Man Considered as a Moral Agent'. Butler is considering and responding to Hobbes, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson among others (Rivers Reason 2: 166-68); consequently the argument is abstract. The application, if there is any, must be deduced from the close of the third sermon:

> Thus they who have been so wise in their generation as to regard only their supposed interest, at the expense and injury of others, shall at last find, that he who has given up all the advantages of the present world, rather than violate his conscience and the relations of life, has infinitely better provided for himself, and secured his own interest and happiness. (Works 1: 57)

These discourses might be called speculative ethics.

The fourth sermon, firmly based on a verse from St. James and sprinkled throughout with scriptural quotations and allusions, is a rebuke to people who talk too much: 'The Wise Man observes, that "there is a time to speak, and a time to keep silence."' One meets with people in the world, who seem never to have made the last of these observations' (1: 66). Without alluding to any particular rank, sex, or calling, Butler gives specific cautions and warnings. 'The occasions then of silence are obvious, and one would think should be easily distinguished by everybody; namely, when a man has nothing to say; or nothing, but what is better left unsaid … ' (68); and again, 'when you say somewhat good of a man which he does not deserve, there is no wrong done him in particular; whereas, when you say evil of a man which he does not deserve, here is a direct formal injury, a real piece of injustice done him' (69-70). Other sermons discuss such topics as resentment; forgiveness of injuries; the love of our neighbor; the love of God. Anyone in the society who could read and had the patience to follow Butler's arguments would find moral instruction in them. These discourses might be called applied ethics.

There is no necessary disconnection between this type of sermon and distinctively Christian beliefs. Blackstone's story of going the round of London churches and hearing not 'a single discourse which had more Christianity in it than the writings of Cicero' may be a fair representation of the state of things 'early in the reign of George II', although Abbey and Overton (1887 300, from which this is quoted), give reasons for doubting it. In fact, a cursory reader could say it of Butler's fourth sermon. However, when it is read in the light of its text—'If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain' (St. James 1: 26)—that is, when it is read as it was heard, the relation between the two becomes apparent, although it is explicit at only one or two points in the argument. The text supplies the basis upon which Butler is able to build up his argument, and could no more be removed without damaging it than a foundation could be removed without danger to the structure sitting upon it. The connection between them illustrates Johnson's reminder: 'When therefore the Obligations of Morality are taught, let the Sanctions of Christianity never be forgotten; by which it will be shown, that they give Strength and Lustre to each other, Religion will appear to be the Voice of Reason, and Morality the Will of God' (qtd. Rivers Reason 2: 183). This type of sermon is closest to the moral essay.

Apologetical. During the first half of the 1700s, Christianity (or at least 'priestcraft', i.e. Anglicanism) was under attack by the heterodox. In addition, the period was punctuated by the invasions of 1715 and 1745. Both dangers recurred late in the century. Throughout its course, widening and intensifying contact with non-Christian cultures called the universal claims of Christian revelation into question (see Sykes, Sheldon 158-63). It is not surprising that the pulpit was often pressed into the service of apologetics, i.e. the reasonable and intellectual defence of the Christian faith. At the beginning of our period, Rupp notes,

> there were increasing signs of scepticism and indeed unbelief, such as the Christian world had not yet known. It is a mark of the perception of John Tillotson that he seems to preach with an awareness that there may be atheists in his audience, and with him there

comes defensiveness in the pulpit which it would never again entirely lose. (112)

The implications of 'defensiveness' are wrong, but there is no doubt that preachers after Tillotson show an awareness that they cannot take unquestioning acceptance of Christian doctrine for granted.[2]

One reason for the proliferation of apologetical sermons may have been the difficulty the Church experienced in getting heretical writings suppressed (Sykes, Sheldon 59-63). On their side, the more radical attackers of Christianity were aware of the dangers of speaking too freely (Rivers Reason 2: 32-34). Their enforced discretion makes it difficult to determine what some of them believed, and this further complicated the task of Christian apologists. Yet, no matter how difficult, defense of the faith was seen as an integral part of the pastoral office. Treatises and pamphlets were one avenue; sermons were another, perhaps more effective, avenue, because they could be delivered *viva voce* to a congregation and then disseminated widely by publication. Their comparative liveliness and brevity, ensured by the circumstances for which they were written, made them easier to get through and more attractive for many readers than a long connected argument.

The first six of Sherlock's Discourses at the Temple illustrate the apologetic mode. The pride of place he gives them indicates the importance of this branch of homiletics. Discourse I (in four parts)—a typical example—is a long comparison of natural and revealed religion, pointed against the Deists, whom, without naming, Sherlock engages at every point.

Here it is necessary to make some discriminations. In one charge, Secker lists the doctrines he wants his clergy to preach on: the Trinity, sin, redemption, and sanctification; 'yet', he says, 'handling these points in a doctrinal, not controversial manner' (qtd. Abbey and Overton 1878 1: 327). Doctrinal and apologetical sermons may discuss the same doctrines; the difference is in approach. Both concentrate on the content of orthodox belief, but the latter does so with special and continued reference to specific misinterpretations or denials of it. This is not always a clean distinction.[3]

Attacks on Roman Catholicism do not usually stand on their own, unless in the latter part of the century (cf. Abbey, 1: 2-4, 216-19, 2: 90-100 for background information on the attitude toward 'Popery'). Many are parts of sermons that should be classified as political or social—e.g. November 5 sermons and sermons delivered in 1715 and 1745 (see the categories below; for a discussion of anti-Catholic sermons in the north of Britain during 'the 45', see Deconinck-Brossard Vie part 2). There are other exceptions early in the century, when the memory of the Glorious Revolution was still vividly alive. Rivers notes that the latitudinarians

> were united in their antipathy to Popery; for obvious political reasons, Rome came to seem a much more powerful and immediate enemy than atheism, and was therefore made the object of concerted attack ... Tillotson preached many anti-Catholic sermons ... These anti-Catholic writings are of great importance philosophically and in relation to the development of freethinking in the 1690's, since they seek to define the relation between reason and faith and the grounds of assent to Christian doctrine. (Reason 1: 47-48)

Political. The ethical/practical sermon is the type likely to be noticed by literary scholars; the political type engrosses the attention of historians. On one side, it shades into apologetics because of the theoretically comprehensive alliance of Church and State. November 5 sermons extolled both the religious and the political settlement, contrasting them with Popery abroad and faction at home. On the other, it can be difficult to distinguish from the social type, again because of the alliance between Church and State. Both are concerned with the right ordering of society, and eighteenth-century divines saw clearly that oppression or injustice in the political realm led to evil effects in the social realm. Political sermons keep their focus on the constitution and workings of the State: the duties and virtues of royalty; the succession; the composition, powers, and place of Parliament; local government; and the political freedoms and privileges of Englishmen. They were not purely self-congratulatory. One purpose *was* to make audiences aware of the goodness and rightness of the political settlement, thus arousing gratitude to God and a spirit of obedience to their rulers. Another was to point out dangers to that settlement, thus making all ranks vigilant in their defense of the established order.

A large percentage of political sermons were delivered on the four days for which special services were inserted in the Book of Common Prayer: November 5 (Gunpowder Plot and 'the happy arrival' of William III), January 30 (martyrdom of Charles I), May 29 (restoration of Charles II), and the anniversary of the sovereign's accession (March 8 for Anne, August 1 for George I, June 11 for George II). The service for January 30 specifically told the preacher what to preach on: 'After the Nicene Creed shall be read, instead of the Sermon for that day, the first and second parts of the Homily against disobedience, and wilful Rebellion, set forth by Authority; or the Minister, who Officiates, shall preach a sermon of his own composing upon the same Argument' (The Book of Common Prayer). These sermons were an instrument of social cohesion: all Anglican churches throughout the land would be reading the same special service, hearing the same Scripture lessons, and listening to sermons on the same subject. As one hostile witness put it: 'Twice at least in every year, for more than a century, from nearly ten thousand pulpits (supposing all the clergy to be obedient to the law) have the doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance been preached to the gaping multitude' (Samuel Heywood, High Church Politics, 1792, qtd. in Clark 260).

Any national crisis or deliverance from crisis called forth a large number of political sermons (Deconinck 'Churches' *passim*; Clark 260 quotes Heywood again on political sermons during the American Revolution). Coronations provided another opportunity for praise and analysis of the political settlement (cf. Clark 158 fn. 233).

A disproportionate number of these sermons may have found their way into print. During the crisis of 1745,

> There was a spate of sermons published … not only by famous whig bishops, understandably eager to prove their zeal for the house of Hanover, but also by unknown members of the inferior clergy who felt the need to express their loyalty to the Establishment. In many cases, the sermons they preached were the only ones they ever

> published. (Deconinck 'Churches' 253)

The 13% shown on Deconinck's pie chart (Appendix A) may be higher than the percentage of political sermons one would hear in an ordinary parish year-in year-out.

Social. Many sermons analyzed the powers, privileges, and duties of various ranks, vocations, or positions in relation to each and to society as a whole. I call these 'social' sermons.[4] They had a number of aims, but all relate back to the orthodox Anglican theory that the state was analogous to a family or a living organism (cf. Clark, especially chapters 1 and 2). Anglican sermons discussed the duties of various ranks to each other and to the larger society; attacked public vices; explained the idea of a commonwealth, i.e. an ordered hierarchical society which deserves cooperation from all its members; elucidated the role of a profession; and inculcated such doctrines as subordination and public charity. In each case the overriding concern was to improve the state of society, because the benefits that obeying Christian teaching brought to any part would eventually be diffused through the whole.

A vast number of this type were preached in the ordinary round of the year to congregations urban and rural, large and small. In 1732,for example, appeared the fourth edition of a collection of sermons by William Fleetwood, late Bishop of Ely, called The Relative Duties of Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, Masters and Servants; Consider'd in Sixteen Practical Discourses: With Three Sermons upon the Case of Self-Murther. Clark quotes a sermon on the duties of domestic servants from a collection called Twenty Sermons upon Social Duties and their Opposite Vices, published in 1750 (85).[5] Others were written for particular occasions or for a specific body. Whitaker devotes four pages to the annual sermons preached to the London branch of the Societies for the Reformation of Manners. Although he is interested only in Sunday observance, the following passage from the sermon preached by Edward Chandler in 1725 is enough to put it in this category:

> It went far towards keeping up the face of virtue and piety, and the preventing of much wickedness, when formerly a man's house was a little oratory, where the master himself

> prayed with all his family, and read a portion of Scripture to them; when he took his children and servants to church with him on Sundays; when his example taught them how they ought to walk, and his authority was exerted on them that walked disorderly. It went well with this City, when masters thus governed their families; and as they laid it down, I need not say how wickedness hath increased. (65)

A sermon by John Downes, delivered to the Society of Cutlers in Sheffield in 1742, lays out a general theory of the advantages of civilization (Deconinck 'Eighteenth' 115) as a basis for warning the audience that the troubles incident to their vocation require the special exercise of certain virtues:

> The Dangers which you ought more particularly to provide against are Dearth, Sickness, bodily Accidents, or a Stagnation in Trade. Not that such Events are to you more certain than to others, but the Consequence more mischievous … these Calamities to the Man who earns his daily Bread by his daily labour, who hath no Hoard to flee to, no Fortune or Friend to depend on, are certain Ruin … And now one would think an Exhortation to Frugality should to you be quite needless. That Wages so dearly earned should of course be carefully used … (qtd. 'Eighteenth' 117)

Charity sermons are perhaps the most numerous subtype (in Deconinck's pie chart, this includes most of the 6% 'Before Lord Mayor &c.'; Appendix A). As with the political sermons, a disproportionate percentage of them were published, usually as separate pamphlets. These sermons have been dealt with elsewhere (Goldberg, Andrew, Deconinck-Brossard Vie), although not always sympathetically. Goldberg sees them as repetitious '"recipes" for raising funds', and as 'saturated in economic and social power relations from the first word' (173)—i.e. as determined by existing structures. When put into the larger category of social sermons, however, they take their place as part of an ambitious attempt to formulate and apply a theory of society which is founded on the divine equity revealed in the Bible. Charity sermons are one mode of exploring the complex effects of Christian doctrine upon the various relations that make up a society.

This typology of eighteenth-century sermons gives an indication of the rich variety to be found within the genre. The span of categories allowed preachers to address almost any topic of importance to their society. The fluid boundaries between categories and the characteristics various ones share freed them to draw upon more than one in a sermon; consequently, we may have some difficulty classifying some specimens. Where are we to put Swift's sermon 'Upon Sleeping in Church' (210-18)? Or one delivered by the bishop of Chester in 1745 which 'draw[s] an unexpected parallel' that blurs the boundaries between the political and the apologetical? 'The chief Agents in this Rebellion may make fair Promises, but no one will believe them, but they who have Faith to believe Transubstantiation. Do they tell us they will ease us for our Taxes? But will they not rather impose much heavier upon us?' (Qtd. Deconinck Churches 257.)

The kinds of purposes these categories presuppose did constrain preachers in ways that required skill and practice to negotiate. Gray remarks on one January 30 sermon: 'Thus Johnson fulfils the requirements of the Book of Common Prayer for the occasion, by denouncing rebelliousness, striking the proper penitential note, and bringing the political theme into close harmony with the spiritual. This was no simple task' (187-88).[6]

The sermon was formulaic, but it drew upon multiple formulae. Sermon-writers had choices in the type they would use, as well as in text, approach, and subject. All were interrelated, so their choices were not absolutely free, yet no one of them predetermined the others. Within the constraints these choices put upon them, the sermon could be a flexible and responsive vehicle. Each contribution had the potential of confirming some expectations for the type and altering others. The mapping of such stresses is a precondition for understanding individual sermons and the genre as a whole.

Other considerations offered opportunities and imposed constraints as well. The next section considers one of these.

II. Audience.

Almost all sermons reached print secondarily; they were written for, and delivered to, what we would now call a 'live audience' in a church. The composition of that audience varied: it might be select, as in sermons preached 'before the King' (or Queen), or miscellaneous and unpredictable, as it must have been in some other London churches, or practically unvarying from week to week, as in country churches. Swift points out that Tillotson made 'elaborate Discourses upon important Occasions, delivered to Princes or Parliaments', but he 'was known to preach after a much more popular Manner in the City Congregations' (67). In some circumstances, the preacher had a share in creating his audience. Archbishop Sharp advanced his career by 'taking the Friday lecture at St Lawrence Jewry...where there was not so much a concourse of people as a convention of divines, especially those of the city who had customarily attended those lectures from the times [of] Dr Tillotson, who was the Tuesday lecturer' (T. Sharp, Life of J. Sharp, London, 1825; qtd. in Sykes Church 254).

Most audiences even in cities may have been heterogeneous. At the beginning of her reign, Queen Anne proclaimed that 'We do ... hereby require them and every one of them ['our loving subjects'] decently and reverently to attend to the worship of God on every Lord's day' (qtd. in Whitaker 35).[7] But various kinds of self-selection ensured that some audiences differed from others. Some churches were more fashionable and some less; some were in rich neighbourhoods and some were not; charity-school children were brought to church Sunday by Sunday (Whitaker 50), and may have made up a large portion of the audience in some churches.[8] Then, too, inhabitants and visitors in cities could take their choice of churches, which they did—especially if there were a sermon, thus continuing the custom evinced in Pepys's diary. Newton urges one of his urban correspondents to

> choose for your stated pastor and teacher, one whom you find most suitable, upon the whole, to your own taste, and whom you are likely to hear with the most pleasure and advantage ... and when your choice is fixed, you will do well to make a point of

> attending his ministry constantly … Especially I would not wish you to be absent for the sake of gratifying your curiosity, to hear some new preacher, who you perhaps have been told is a very extraordinary man. For in *your way* such occasions might possibly offer almost every week ... But … you have many opportunities of hearing sermons occasionally in the course of the week; and thus you may partake of that variety of gifts which I have already spoken of. (106, 107, 109; 'variety of gifts' here refers to different preachers who have different strengths)

There might be shades of belief in the audience too; I noted above that Tillotson adapts his arguments to atheists as well as believers. The persistence of scepticism and infidelity throughout the century forced succeeding generations of preachers to follow his lead.

The Anglican parish-system itself guaranteed that most preachers would stand up before a congregation composed of representatives from a number of social strata, endued with various degrees of native intelligence, and educated to different levels. The composition of their audience reflected the composition of society *in parvo*, so the theory of society as an organism or family could be applied equally well here. This would show most clearly in country churches. Sir Roger de Coverley 'is Landlord to the whole Congregation' in his country parish, and treats them as though he were their father: 'he keeps them in very good Order, and will suffer no Body to sleep in it besides himself; for if by Chance he has been surprized into a short Nap at Sermon, upon recovering out of it he stands up and looks about him, and if he sees any Body else nodding, either wakes them himself, or sends his Servant to them' (Addison and Steele 1: 461). After the service, 'The Knight walks down from his seat in the Chancel, between a double Row of his tenants … and every now and then inquires how such an one's Wife or Mother, or Son, or Father do whom he does not see at Church; which is understood as a secret Reprimand to the Person that is absent' (1: 461).

In A. D. Gilbert's summary, 'while the Church was far from being the universally patronized monopoly envisaged in traditional Establishment theory, its wealth, its influence and authority remained immense. In much of England Anglicanism and society remained virtually coterminous' (qtd. in Clark 137).[9] Preachers had to be aware that, as Sherlock put it, the 'Religion' they preached, 'if it is of any use at all, is equally of use to all Men' (Discourses 1: 157). Although he was speaking to a parish of lawyers, he did not scruple to affirm that the truths of Christianity must be made accessible to the lowest ranks: 'But the People themselves, what must become of them? They have no Time for Study, and they must have true Notions of Religion at a cheaper Rate, or not at all. As Religion is a thing in which all Men are concerned, it must be conveyed in a Manner which suits Men of all Conditions' (Discourses 1: 160). This was particularly important for those who could not read, yet all could be benefited by proper preaching:

> since the acquisition of books has been facilitated by their numbers, oral instruction is rendered less necessary. But though books are easily procured, yet even in this age of information, there are thousands in the lower classes who cannot read. Besides, … the same precepts inculcated by a living instructor, adorned by a proper oratory, enforced by a serious and authoritative manner, produce a powerful effect, not to be experienced in solitary retirement. There is likewise a sympathy communicated in a numerous audience, which attaches the mind more strongly to the speaker. (Knox 'Preaching' 157).

If preachers had the interest of their congregations at heart, they tried to follow Blair's advice: 'IT will be of much advantage to keep always in view the different ages, characters, and conditions of men, and to accommodate directions and exhortations to these different classes of hearers' (2.112).

This creates a complex interdependence between speaker and auditors. The former must keep the expectations and abilities of the latter in mind while choosing a subject, planning the divisions and the method of argument, and deciding upon particular applications of the text. Blair expatiates on 'the choice of subjects for Sermons':

> [I]n general, they should be such as appear to the Preacher to be the most useful, and the

> best accommodated to the circumstances of his Audience. No man can be called eloquent, who speaks to an Assembly on subjects, or in a strain, which none or few of them comprehend. The unmeaning applause which the ignorant give to what is above their capacity, common sense, and common probity, must teach every man to despise. Usefulness and true Eloquence always go together; and no man can long be reputed a good Preacher who is not acknowledged to be a useful one. (108)

Specialised audiences might have special expectations. In a recent essay, James Caudle has analysed the cumbersome process the House of Commons followed in choosing speakers for the four annual parliamentary sermons ('Preaching'). Both in this process and in the vote of thanks and permission to print which followed, the House attempted to exert some control over what was said before it. Yet even here, audience expectations were not always met. Once—admittedly, only once—the House had to expunge its vote of thanks (Caudle 253).

Heterogeneous audiences imposed other constraints. Since most preachers were university men, they needed to remember the ignorant and unlettered in their congregation. Johnson attributes 'the great success which those people called methodists have' to

> their expressing themselves in a plain and familiar manner, which is the only way to do good to the common people, and which clergymen of genius ought to do from a principle of duty, when it is suited to their congregations; a practice, for which they will be praised by men of sense. To insist against drunkenness as a crime, because it debases reason, the noblest faculty of man, would be of no service to the common people; but to tell them that they may die in a fit of drunkenness, and shew them how dreadful that would be, cannot fail to make a deep impression. (Boswell 1.284)

Wesley consciously addressed his first volume of Sermons (1746)

> *ad populum*, —to the bulk of mankind—to those who neither relish nor understand the art of speaking, but who notwithstanding are competent judges of those truths which are necessary to present and future happiness … I design plain truth for plain people.

> Therefore of set purpose I abstain from all nice and philosophical speculations, from all perplexed and intricate reasonings, and as far as possible from even the show of learning, unless in sometimes citing the original Scriptures. I labour to avoid all words which are not easy to be understood, all which are not used in common life ... (qtd. in Rivers Reason 1: 215)

Perhaps he believed that the intellectual gap between 'the bulk of mankind' and the higher ranks was unbridgeable in a single sermon, and he had chosen his audience in advance. The regular clergy did not have this luxury; they had also to speak to those with higher capacities and education, whether their parish was urban or rural. The peroration of Johnson's own sermon no. 4, a charity sermon, draws applications specific to the various economic classes in the place where it was delivered (Bath, as a footnote tells us). It assumes that at least part of the congregation can be convinced by abstract reasoning and wishes to act upon a better stimulus than that of immediate enjoyment:

> But if, as the wisest among the votaries of pleasure have confessed, they feel themselves unsatisfied and deluded; if, as they own, their ardour is kept up by dissimulation, and they lay aside their appearance of felicity, when they retire from the eyes of those among whom they desire to propagate the deceit ... they may surely spare something for the purchase of solid satisfaction, and cut off part of that expense, by which nothing is procured, for the sake of giving to others those necessaries which the common wants of our being demand, and by the distribution of which they may lay up some treasures of happiness against ... the day of age, of sickness and of death ... (Sermons 49-50)

The gap that Wesley was conscious of should not blind us to other hints about the state of knowledge and sophistication in audiences. Certainly the lower ranks included a number who were biblically and doctrinally ignorant. One nobleman noted the following at Hungerford in 1733:

> Sunday, 12—I lay at Sandy Lane. The ignorance of the colliers in this neighbourhood is

> extraordinary. A gentleman asked some of them whether they went to church. They replied, No. Why then, said he, I believe you know nothing of the Commandments. They all replied they knew such a family living in their parts, but they did not know them personally. (Percival quoted in Whitaker 81-82).

They included a large proportion of illiterates as well—Colley estimates that far less than a third of all adults in the Midlands were literate in the early 1700s (16). Yet this is not the whole story. Charity school graduates at least knew the catechism and other beliefs of the Church of England (Mallet 211). Perhaps the majority of illiterates had conned the basic texts of the Church—those who could read certainly had.

> [A]s a popular commentary on the Prayer Book explained, the Church Catechism is 'so short that the youngest children may learn it by heart; and yet so full, that it contains all things necessary to be known in order to salvation.'[10] The Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, and the Ten Commandments—these are the basic texts of Anglican faith, and in orthodox households were apparently drilled into children at a very early age. Laetitia Hawkins, the daughter of Johnson's friend Sir John, believed that every child of three years old 'may learn' the Lord's prayer, and was horrified, many years after Johnson's death, to hear of a certain criminal who was found to be 'ignorant not only of the Ten Commandments and the Creed, but of that which it is hardly possible not to know, the Lord's prayer.'[11] And Johnson himself was much surprised to find when he first entered school that one of his classmates had never been taught his Catechism (Works, I, 13). (Chapin 10-11).

Only one of his schoolmates did *not* know it. The gap was not be as wide as it would be now, when in spite of nearly universal literacy many adults cannot even name the Gospels in sequence.

We can see examples of the ways in which this complex of theological expectations in preacher and audience works itself out by looking at James Woodforde's sermons. Woodforde was preaching to a country audience: Weston was miles from Norwich, and Castle Cary was miles from anywhere. Yet Woodforde's view of the preacher's duty to his flock is similar to

Sherlock's in London and Blair's in Edinburgh:

> It is undoubtedly a great part of the ministerial office in their public discourses to endeavour to assist men in these particulars. Not first to blind them, as the manner of some is, and then lead them where they please; but to assist their understandings, to endeavour to enlarge the views of the ignorant, and give them those helps to know their duty, which otherwise they might not have. (Qtd. in Sykes, 'Sermons' 102-03)

One of his sermons is an adaptation of Tillotson, the metropolitan preacher. 'Indeed,' Sykes says of this sermon, 'Woodforde *is* Tillotson, shortened for the benefit of rustic congregations, but otherwise faithfully and literally reproduced' ('Sermons' 100). In another sermon, he preaches on natural religion from Job 38: 14, but adapts his illustrations to the vocation of his hearers, beginning with an appeal to raise the ordinary course of their thoughts during the workday: 'We are employed perhaps about some or other of his creatures; but how and with what intentions? Do we regard them as the workmanship of the all-wise and almighty Creator? Observing how exquisitely they are formed, what ends they promote, and to what uses they serve?' Sykes shows how Woodforde applied this to his hearers' specific vocation:

> Therefore agriculture should 'be done with a constant and habitual eye to the glory of God, and it easily may, without any inconvenience or disadvantage to our secular designs.' He that followed the plough could reflect 'what perfect art, what incomprehensible contrivance, appear in the formation and structure of the vegetable world'; and if during the course of his labour he should 'lift up his eyes to the heavens what astonishing instances do we find of the Creator's power and perfection, such as every eye may perceive and every understanding contemplate.' Whether the countryman regarded the earth below or the sky above, the seed which he sowed or the cattle which he tended, 'every object we meet with, whether great or small, bears the stamp of an all-perfect Creator, is a mark of His wisdom, a monument of His power, and a proof of His goodness; insomuch that it may be difficult for us to determine whether ornament or

convenience, use or dignity, has been most regarded.' ('Sermons' 105-06)

An equally important concern for the preacher in the light of his knowledge of his audience was style. Literary scholars have more to say about this, but connections between style and audience are brief asides to stylistic analysis. Yet there is evidence that this was a primary concern, and still should be. The putative writer of Swift's 'Letter to a Young Gentleman' is 'a Person of Quality', i.e. a sermon-hearer; in the section on style, which comes practically at the beginning, he constantly directs the novice priest's attention to the 'Quality and Understanding' of his audience (65-68). The move toward a plain style after the Restoration was in part a reaction against the pulpit theatricals of the preceding era; one divine, writing in 1670, commented on preachers' 'simple phantastick Glory, and ... great studiousness of being wonder'd at; as if getting into the Pulpit were a kind of Staging, where nothing was to be considered, but how much the Sermon takes, and how much star'd at' (qtd. Lessenich 26 from John Eachard, The Grounds and Occasions of the Contempt of the Clergy Enquired Into, London [1670]). Another, preaching to preachers, warned that 'We must avoid with a particular care all affectation of fine language, and a glittering kind of eloquence, which, whatever useless admiration it may raise in weak judges, must produce great contempt in more judicious ones' (William Leechman, 'The Temper, Character, and Duty of a Minister of the Gospel', Sermons 1.159; qtd. Lessenich 28; see 30-31 for other references). Tillotson is the exemplar of this movement, since he 'had so successfully led the way in reforming the method and style of composures for the pulpit' (T. Sharp, Life of J. Sharp, London [1825]; qtd. Sykes 254). In his concern for intelligibility,

> It is reported ... that he was wont, before preaching his sermons to read them privately to an illiterate old woman of plain sense, who lived in the house with him, and wherever he found he had employed any word or expression, that she did not understand, he instantly erased it, and substituted a plainer in its place, till he brought the style down to her level. (George Campbell, Lectures on Systematic Theology and Pulpit Eloquence, London, 1807 304-05; qtd. Lessenich 17)

This does not mean that his style was crude; Burnet commented that

> no man … knew better the Art of preserving the Majesty of things under a Simplicity of Words; tempering these so equally together, that neither did his Thoughts sink, nor his Stile swell: keeping always the due Mean between a low Flatness and the Dresses of False Rhetorick ... He said what was just necessary to give clear Ideas of things, and no more: He laid aside all long and affected Periods: His sentences were short and clear: and the whole Thread was of a piece, plain, and distinct ... Whether he explained Points of Divinity, Matter of Controversy, or the Rules of Morality, ... there was something peculiar in him on them all, that conquered the Minds, as well as it commanded the Attention of his Hearers: who felt all the while that they were learning somewhat, and were never tired by him ... (qtd. Mitchell 334-35; note on popularity Simon 291)

His style was 'the common speech of gentlemen', says Irene Simon:

> He seems to talk to his congregation, to be one of them, and to share their interests and troubles ... From his earnest manner they could feel that the truths he was expounding or the duties he was enforcing mattered as greatly to him as to them, but his amiable tone and easy style must have banished all stiffness from religion as well as from the intercourse between speaker and listeners. (293)

A century later, Blair was impressing the same concerns on his hearers:

> WITH respect to Style, that which the Pulpit requires, must certainly, in the first place, be very perspicuous. As discourses spoken there, are calculated for the instruction of all sorts of hearers, plainness and simplicity should reign in them. All unusual, swoln, or high sounding words, should be avoided; especially all words that are merely poetical, or merely philosophical ... Dignity of expression, indeed, the Pulpit requires in a high degree; nothing that is mean or groveling, no low or vulgar phrases, ought on any account to be admitted. But this dignity is perfectly consistent with simplicity. The words employed may be all plain words, easily understood, and in common use; and yet the

> style may be abundantly dignified, and, at the same time, very lively and animated. (114-15)

These considerations suggest that the interplay between the speaker and the audience could be complex in ways that we are unfamiliar with. In the present state of knowledge we cannot state dogmatically where the balance of power lay—if in fact that is an appropriate term. Pattison exaggerates when he says that 'The preachers of any period … are as necessarily bound to the preconceived notions, as to the language, of those whom they have to exhort. The pulpit does not mould the forms into which religious thought in any age runs, it simply accommodates itself to those that exist' (64). The fact that Woodforde could preach Tillotson at Castle Cary and Weston, when a century before Tillotson could not preach himself at Keddington,[12] shows that such a formulation needs to be modified considerably.

Not that the preachers could be called dictators in the pulpit. Complaints about behaviour in church give that a decided negative. In the country, the vicar of Cranbrook, Kent, in a sermon published in 1728, 'pleads for a more reverent behavior in Church' and rebukes auditors for bringing in dogs—and others for showing no 'zeal to have them driven out' (Whitaker 77-78). In the city, 'Lady Primley's' satirical portrait is completed by a brush-stroke showing her drowsiness in church, occasioned by 'her own silence, and a continual murmur in the place' (Universal Observer, Jan. 20, 1733, reprinted in the Gentleman's Magazine, and qtd. in Whitaker 82-84). More significantly, the preaching of Thomas Pyle, the Arian vicar and curate of King's Lynn, made so little impact upon his congregation that when they rebuilt the parish church after nearly fifty years of his incumbency, they put an emblem of the 'Trinity in Unity … on the front panel of the … pulpit' (Jacob 'Church' 79).[13]

But this evidence must be balanced against the overall thrust of Jacob's article (v. 76-80). In particular, he shows that Pyle's predecessor started a religious society whose rules stated that it was to meet

> every Lord's Day evening [in the vestry!] after divine service for religious conference …

> [I]f a chapter be read out of the New Testament, [its rules went on,] then the Society to discourse of the contents of that chapter, aiming thereby each to improve himself in the undertaking thereof and in the lively application thereof to his own heart and conscience, and render the influence more powerful to the mind both of himself and of his conscience. (qtd. Jacob 'Church' 77)

No greater compliment could be paid to the impact of sermons upon the King's Lynn audience than this earnest desire to imitate them. The society lasted for forty years. Another counter-example to the idea of the pulpit's powerlessness to shape the expectations of its audience comes from Thomas Sherlock's ministry.

> When Sherlock published his occasional sermons in 1753, during the illness that preceded his death, Lord Chancellor Hardwicke had a copy of the first volume brought to him by Dr. Nichols. He asked him whether there was among them a sermon on John xx.30-1; and on hearing that there was, bade him turn to the end, and then beginning with the words, 'Go to your natural religion,' recited from memory the whole passage contrasting Christ and Mahomet, with which the discourse had eloquently concluded. It was full thirty years since he had heard it preached. (Abbey 2: 49)

Hardwicke, a man of no mean character, and not particularly friendly to organised Christianity, had surrendered his memory so entirely to the preacher that he retained his entire peroration.

Much of what can be said about audience at this point is inexact. A lonely explorer must fill in parts of his map from hearsay; even when he sketches what he sees, it may be a mirage. The story about Tillotson's old woman is similar to stories told about Falkland, Malherbe, and Moliere (except that they 'submitted their works to their servants'; Lessenich 17; cf. Rivers Reason 1: 184 for similar story about Watts). Nevertheless, we can make one or two deductions.

Foremost is the effect upon the way we read sermons as literature. An understanding of the sermon's original audience, its capacities and expectations, and the ways in which discourses worked with these capacities and expectations, is fundamental for forming our tastes and our expectations. There is more complexity here than I have suggested. ‘One of the first qualities of preaching is to be popular’, says Blair; however, ‘not in the sense of accommodation to the humours and prejudices of the people (which tends only to make a Preacher contemptible); [instead,] in the true sense of the word, calculated to make impression on the people; to strike and to seize their hearts’ (2: 105-06). And the terms of the calculation change with shifts in the composition of the audience and the occasion on which it is addressed.

Second is a series of questions about audiences. Basic statistics about the number of churchgoers are lacking. We do not know their proportion to the population as a whole, how often they attended, or whether they preferred services with sermons. Almost all we know is that there were a lot of them. Donald Greene estimates that ‘perhaps ninety per cent of the population of England were connected with the established church ... and attended its services at least once a week most of their lives’ (299). Even if ‘the habit of non-attendance had seized a hold in the countryside’ by Jane Austen’s time (Collins191),[14] the audience for sermons dwarfed that of all other genres combined. What were their ways of listening to sermons? Of remembering and applying them? W. Fraser Mitchell and Caroline Richardson analysed the note-taking habits of seventeenth-century audiences (30-36 and 75-77 respectively), but I haven’t found anything comparable for the succeeding period. Swift’s instructions seem to imply that it had gone out of fashion: ‘I ... desir[e] you to express the Heads of your Divisions in as few and clear Words, as you possibly can; otherwise, I, and many Thousand others, will never be able to retain them, nor consequently to carry away a Syllable of the Sermon’ (71). Yet in the early 1800s Harriet Martineau was taking notes:

> It was then that we began the excellent practice of writing recollections of one of the sermons of the day ... Dr Carpenters were the best ever listened to for that purpose—so good that I have known him carry a ‘recollection’ written by a cousin of mine at the age of sixteen, to Mrs Carpenter, as a curiosity—not a single sentence of his sermon being altogether absent from the hearer’s version of it ... (Autobiography, qtd. in d’Haussy 47)

And Caudle points to an example of an eighteenth-century sermon printed from an auditor's transcript (see next section). We need to ask who took notes, when and why, and how they were used.

III. Orality and Print.

The people who heard a sermon were not necessarily its only audience. We must consider as well the relation between the sermon as a spoken discourse and the sermon as a publication. One difference between sermons and other books and pamphlets from the period is that the former were always delivered orally before being typeset.[15] Essays, poems, works of philosophy, and court reports often mimic modes of conversation, but behind the printed text of the sermon there really is 'the speaking voice.'

Consider the trajectory of a printed sermon. In outline, it might begin life as a written text. Then it would be delivered at least once; revised, printed, and disseminated; and the printed text might be revised and delivered again to different audiences. Each part of this process deserves closer examination.

There are several ways of composing a sermon: a preacher may make notes and an outline, which he then either memorises or takes into the pulpit, or he may write it out and memorise it, or he may read it from the manuscript. Different ways have been favoured in different times.[16] In the seventeenth century, as Mitchell shows, one's choice of method depended to some extent on one's party in the Church (16-27), with a consciousness, however, that the end result, in whatever way obtained, might be a candidate for the press: 'There was diversity of practice, therefore, but always with a tendency towards some full-dress printable form sooner or later' (19). Despite the counter-example of Tillotson, who always read his sermons, Mitchell claims that Anglican sermons 'in the last quarter of the century' were delivered from notes (24, 25). In the next century, however, the invariable practice of Anglican preachers was to read from a manuscript written *in extenso*.[17] Thus the sermon comes into being as a written composition. But it is written to be read to a specific audience, and to that audience on a specific occasion. That occasion might be a Sunday in the church year, the meeting of the Worshipful Society of something or other, or a fast day during a time of local or national tension. These considerations shape what the preacher says and also how he says it. The poet, the essayist, the historian might imagine himself reading his manuscript to an audience, and in some cases he might have a chance to do it (cf. Boswell 1.621); but the preacher always knew that what he had committed to paper was what he would be pronouncing in the pulpit.

And what he might be pronouncing more than once. It seems doubtful that Butler's sermons at the Rolls were delivered there repeatedly—he held the post for just eight years—and the first three in particular do not seem suited to Houghton-le-Skerne, Stanhope, or any other later benefice. But the practice of John Sharp the younger (Deconinck 'Eighteenth' 111-12) and Woodforde (Sykes 'Sermons' 98) shows that it was customary to preach the same sermon again and again, so long as there was a decent interval between repetitions or the audience was different. So much so that the Dissenter Doddridge advised his students not to 'preach the same sermon over too often either in the same or different places. It hurts a man's reputation' (qtd. in Deconinck 'Eighteenth' 112). Nevertheless, Sharp preached one sermon 205 times in 44 years (112). Sermons on public occasions would be unlikely candidates for repetition, yet early in his career Secker preached an Assize sermon, 'which, with proper changes, I have lately printed, as an Accession sermon' (9).

Sermons that were published without having been preached appear to be fairly common in the seventeenth century (Mitchell 14-15), but they were rare in its successor. 'It has sometimes been questioned whether Wesley actually preached his sermons as they are written', says Downey (201), but only because the doubters underestimate the abilities of eighteenth-century audiences. The only authenticated example I have found is a sermon which political manoeuvring kept Bishop Fleetwood from delivering to the House of Lords (Caudle 245). However, almost every one of the thousands of printed sermons reached that form after delivery *viva voce*. They got there for any number of reasons.

Parliamentary sermons were published by order of the House (Caudle 241). Those delivered before a distinguished audience—the monarch or the Lord Mayor—or for the annual meetings of charities and such bodies as the Sons of the Clergy and the Society for the Reformation of Manners, might be printed at their request or command. Popular preachers often published volumes of collected sermons. Furthermore, their sermons might appear without their knowledge; the survival of note-taking led to such publications as the one noted by Caudle (250): A Sermon preach'd January 31. 1714/15. By Henry Sacheverell, D.D. Rector of St. Andrew's Holborn. As it was taken in shorthand by one of his parishioners ...

What happened to the sermon between delivery and printing? Did the preacher feel anxiety about being read just as he was heard? A preface from 1704 shows that at least one preacher did:

> This sermon was designed for no other Sense than the Ear, and no further a spread than among a single Congregation, and therefore it's easie to observe, with how little Guard either of Accuracy or Language it comes out. As my own hurry in making it ready for the press, allow'd me only time to Transcribe it, so indeed I durst not be at any New Pains to prepare it for the Publick Tast; lest it should appear more like a Gaudy jest; than a Memorial, or an Improvement of the late Storm. (I.e. the storm of 1703; qtd. in Mitchell 29).

How closely, then, does what we read match what was said in the pulpit? In other words, how far behind the text is the voice of the preacher? McIntosh[18] has noted significant differences between what Burke said in Parliament and what he had printed:

> Without question Burke revised for rhetorical and literary effect; so the printed texts are less oral and more gentrified than the actual speeches had been. He changes relatively simple locutions into flowery polysyllables: 'we are bold to say' becomes 'we are warranted to assert', and 'a banya has other names too' becomes 'the Banyan is known by other appellations.' (66)

'In another place,' McIntosh notes, 'the printed version is slightly but unmistakably more purple than the spoken version.' But this is late in the century, when polysyllabification and periodicity, those supposedly unnatural practices, had come to be expected. We have some contradictory hints from the first part of the century. Deconinck's work with the corpus of John Sharp the younger suggests that the differences were insignificant ('Eighteenth' 112-14). Secker claims to have done a lot more with Butler's Rolls sermons: 'In the Winter 1725..6 he published the first Edition of his Sermons. I took much pains in making his meaning easier to be apprehended. Yet they were called obscure' (10). This may be a unique case of editing spoken discourses to make them *easier* for the reader.

Competition in publishing was stiff because the practice of writing out sermons meant that a huge demand was overwhelmed by an almost infinite supply (if just half of the parishes in England heard an original sermon weekly, more than 250,000 manuscripts were being produced every year). The bookseller's reply to Parson Adams is an evasive exaggeration, but with truth at the bottom of it:

> 'sermons are mere drugs. The trade is so vastly stocked with them, that really, unless they come out with the name of Whitefield or Wesley, or some other such great man, as a bishop, or those sort of people, I don't care to touch; unless now it was a sermon preached on the 30th of January; or we could say in the title page, published at the earnest request of the congregation, or the inhabitants; but, truly, for a dry piece of sermons, I had rather be excused; especially as my hands are so full at present.' (Fielding Joseph Andrews 71).

He does offer to 'take the manuscript with me to town, and send you my opinion of it in a very short time' (71); Fielding's multiple ironic modes make it impossible to tell whether this is sincere. Sermons published individually, if popular or controversial, ran through a series of cheaper and cheaper editions, starting as a quarto on fine paper and going down to octavo and then duodecimo (Caudle 252). As Tony Claydon notes, the cheap octavos and duodecimos, with a small number of pages, 'no illustrations or complex graphics', and 'basic' 'production values', were 'well within reach of a large proportion of the working population' (214).

> Someone shelling out a few pence every few weeks might soon accumulate a satisfyingly uniform run of works to put together on their shelves. Such collectability was enhanced by a British tradition of using printed spiritual literature as a guide to personal piety, and by the fact that sermons fell into natural groups. Often, for example, sermons were preached and printed in series, with each piece dealing with different aspects of a single theological or moral problem. People buying part of such a series would clearly be encouraged to own the whole set. Similarly, purchasers might want to collect particular types of sermon. They might wish, for instance, to have everything by a particular preacher, or preached on particular occasions, or before particular bodies. The evidence that people did, in fact, collect sermons in this way is contained in many of the world's research libraries. (214)[19]

Sermons published in a collection might make up one volume or several, organised in one of a number of ways.[20] Although out of reach of common labourers, they certainly were not a product just for the aristocracy.

Here, with distribution to a national audience, one might think the story would end. But it doesn't, because a popular sermon could find another life by being revised (if necessary) and delivered again by a different preacher, as we have noticed Woodforde doing with Tillotson. The history of borrowing extends as far back as St Augustine (Hagstrum and Gray xxvii-xxviii), but reached its zenith in the eighteenth century. Addison's approval of the practice for country congregations gave it a special impetus. Sir Roger de Coverley tells Mr Spectator that when his chaplain first came to him, 'I made him a Present of all the good Sermons which have been printed in *English*, and only begged of him that every *Sunday* he would pronounce one of them in the Pulpit. Accordingly, he has digested them into such a Series, that they follow one another naturally, and make a continued system of practical Divinity' (1: 441). Addison's comment is,

> I could heartily wish that more of our Country-Clergy would follow this Example; and instead of wasting their Spirits in laborious Compositions of their own, would endeavour, after a handsome Elocution and all those other Talents that are proper to enforce what has been penn'd by greater Masters. This would be not only more easy to themselves, but more edifying to the People. (1: 442)

Swift's successor at Kilroot, discovering a packet of his sermons, transcribed them for his own use (97). Later in the century, Johnson writes to a clergyman that

> Your present method of making your sermons seems very judicious. Few frequent Preachers can be supposed to have sermons more their own, than yours will be. Take care to register some where or other the authours from whom your several discourses are borrowed, and do not imagine that you shall always remember what perhaps You now think it impossible to forget. (Letters 311)

With the growth of the idea of copyright and intellectual property, however, others began to criticise the practice:

> The practice of preaching sermons composed by others is now become so common, that many of the clergy scruple not to avow it, and think themselves justified by the authority of Mr. Addison, who in one of his Spectators has very incautiously given countenance thereto; ... as it is an assumption of the merit of another, the practice is unjust, and, as it leads to a belief of that which is not true, in a high degree immoral. (Hawkins qtd. in Johnson Sermons xxviii-xxix).

In 1769, James Trusler came up with a money-making scheme for preachers anxious to avoid the stigma of reading from a printed volume. He 'sent circulars to every parish in England and Ireland proposing to print in script type, in imitation of handwriting, about a hundred and fifty sermons at the price of one shilling each, in order to save the clergy both study and the trouble of transcribing. This ingenious scheme appears to have met with considerable success' (Cooper).

The practice of borrowing sermons—whether the borrower adapted them or not—is abhorrent in modern eyes. Doubtless, it was employed as a trouble- and labour-saving device by many divines, especially those who had to 'preach sometims [sic] for decades of years, week after week, to the same congregation' (qtd. in d'Haussy 36). But it bears witness to something more: an adherence to, and respect for, a standard of English prose no longer reachable in the pulpit, as the embarrassing sermons of modern day preachers—even bishops—make clear. Its effects are incalculable, but we must reckon that the reading of printed sermons, at least by bringing all of its auditors for a half-hour per week into the circle of polite diction and style, prepared the literate for other solid and entertaining works couched in the same idiom, and brought the illiterate to a place where they could hear such works read with some understanding and enjoyment.

Taken in conjunction with the preceding chapter and the preceding sections of this chapter, the complex interplay between speech and writing revealed in the homiletical practices of this period opens up a wide field for further work.

Considering it in the light of the popularity of the sermon and its undoubted impact on modes of language in the eighteenth-century—what grammar, syntax, diction, were in common use, what was considered acceptable and what was not—we can start to ask about relations between the oral and printed cultures of England. Our era speaks and writes with the knowledge that there is a wide gap between the two forms of communication. Explicit statements of this sound flat— Ong's 'Print encourages a sense of closure, a sense that what is found in a text has been finalized, has reached a state of completion' (132) and McIntosh's 'Talk is loose, according to Erving Goffman; truly appropriate utterances are the exception not the rule' (36). We all know that an interview, or a talk before an audience, must be edited mercilessly before it can appear in any permanent form of publication. We know also that the form I am writing in must be recast before it will do as a paper at an academic conference. This seems to explain why the sermons of the eighteenth century occasionally bored their audiences; but contemporary complaints laid stress on delivery, not composition: 'when a Preacher reads his sermon with as much coldness and indifference as he would read a news-paper, or an act of parliament; he must not be surprized, if his audience discover the same indifference, or even take a nap, especially if the service be after dinner' (Richard Graves, The Spiritual Quixote, ed. Tracy, Oxford English Novels, London, 1967, qtd. in Lessenich 132). The Spectator goes so far as to call them 'the best Sermons in the World', ruined by poor delivery: 'Our preachers stand stock-still in the Pulpit, and will not so much as move a Finger to set [them] off' (3: 521). Considering the ubiquitousness of sermons, we need a different hypothesis for the relation between speech and print in eighteenth-century England. Instead of a 'literate' culture with a 'massive oral residue' (Ong 41), the evidence provided by this form suggests that the two coexist in a dynamic balance, with fluid and permeable borders between writing, speech, and print. McIntosh quotes David Cressy: '"Much of the cultural life of the seventeenth century was not strictly oral or literate, but a combination of both,"' and comments that it was 'in the form of reading aloud and listening to sermons' (36). This is true for the succeeding period as well.

A corollary follows: sermons were the agent that kept orality and print bound together in this balance. No other form satisfies all the criteria of crossing and recrossing the borders that the sermon establishes: a) by necessity, b) at a large number of physical and social points, c) before the vast majority of the nation in its several congregations, and d) as frequently as once a week. The bulk of the discourse which appeared successively in spoken and then printed form in the eighteenth century was homiletical; drama and parliamentary orations together occupy a comparatively microscopic space.

One example of the implications of this theory comes to mind immediately: the quoted conversations in Boswell's Life. Some of them appear stilted, just as conversations in some twentieth-century biographies appear stilted. But *not* 'just as.' The latter are removed from the 'looseness' of ordinary 'talk'; the former also tidy up loose ends, but in addition they pitch their tone too high; the sentiments and expressions are too polished, too polite. This they share with the half a million sermons a year. Perhaps polite spoken conversation in many circles actually reached a level at which a published transcript could, without radical editing, be comparable with polite writing.

We can see this dynamic balance breaking down in the Evangelical and Methodist sermons of the century's second half. Lenz has drawn attention to the increased 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic' emotionalism in Wesley and Whitefield (116-23). The former refers to pointers in the text—vivid descriptions and images, exclamations, and so on. The latter 'deals with the pragmatic relationship between speaker and audience, with their simultaneity in time and space, and ... includes the non-recorded, spontaneous body language of feeling' (111): none of this is present, of course, in the manuscript which accompanies the preacher into the pulpit (or the open field), and all of it must be lost by publication afterwards. The loss in sermons by Butler and Sherlock is trifling. But for Whitefield it is disastrous; his 'religious passion' is transformed into 'literary bathos' (Morris 204). 'Whereas the sweet rationalism of a sermon by Tillotson employs a language appropriate to the medium of print, evangelical fervor, even in a highly literate population, is always best conveyed through the spoken word' (204).

These three topics of types, audience, and orality/literacy do not constitute an adequate prolegomenon for the study of the eighteenth-century sermon. They do give some idea of the unique forces that operate on the form—pressures exerted on the preacher and counter-pressures he can exert to shape his discourse in accordance with his convictions and predilections. The next chapter turns from consideration of background to ask what happens when we analyse individual sermons as literary productions.

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[1] Thus sermon 7 in Butler's Fifteen Sermons is marked specifically as 'Preached upon the second Sunday after Easter', because the text is found in the Old Testament reading for the day.

[2] It is hard to say whether this held true for rural preachers as well. One might assume that skepticism would have penetrated remote rural districts much later than the urban centers of the kingdom; yet if rural parsons were preaching sermons they'd gotten from published collections, the relation between the audience for the original delivery and the audience for the copy becomes more complex. See chapter 5.

[3] For a social/political historian's discussion of various kinds of sermons which can be called 'apologetical' (or at least 'polemical'), see Deconinck-Brossard Vie part 3.

[4] Louis Landa's 'rough but serviceable classification of Swift's sermons includes 'doctrinal and ethical', 'political', and 'broadly sociological' (Swift 106-07). However, 'social' seems better to me than 'sociological,' with its anachronistic associations.

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[5] Attributed to Patrick Delany; Clark is actually quoting at second-hand.

[6] It is only fair to note that he adds, 'Having read a number of the 480 sermons listed in the British Museum Catalogue of Printed Books as delivered on the day of the commemoration of the martyrdom, I am convinced that Johnson succeeded more than most' (187-88).

[7] But Whitaker notes (51) that there were complaints about non-attendance as early as 1711.

[8] In 1729,for example, there were 1,419 schools in England with 22,503 pupils; Westminster and London alone had 5,225 (Rupp 309; cf. Whitaker 50).

[9] He is referring to a specific date—1740—but the description is roughly applicable throughout the period.

[10] An endnote gives the source as: Charles Wheatley, A Rational Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer (London, 1852), 374. First published in 1710.

[11] An endnote gives the source as: Memoirs, Anecdotes, Facts, and Opinions, 2 vols. in one (London, 1824), 2.152, 154.

[12] 'Before June 1664 he resigned Keddington in favor of his curate; his own preaching had been distasteful to his puritan parishioners' (Gordon, Alexander).

[13] Jacob is quoting from Memoirs of a Royal Chaplain. The Correspondence of Edmund Pyle DD ... Ed. Albert Hartshorne. London, 1905.

[14] A footnote cites Peter Virgin, The Church in an Age of Negligence: Ecclesiastical Reform, 1700-1840. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989, 5-6.

[15] See below for the few exceptions.

[16] A short history is found in Mitchell 17-18.

[17] See Martin for a history of the controversy between memorizers/extemporizers and those who read their sermons from a manuscript. Although Martin claimed that 'there was neither victory on one side nor defeat on the other', the tone of his sources is certainly compatible with Blair's assumption that the sermon in England is a read discourse (2.118). Martin suggests that memorised discourses were a trademark of Dissenting homiletics. Note too that the arguments he reports were centred upon the effects of different kinds of delivery on audiences; and he draws attention to the connection between this controversy and the contemporary concern with elocution (286, 293).

[18] He is drawing on Christopher Reid, Edmund Burke and the Practice of Political Writing, NY: St. Martin's, 1985.

[19] The three Atterbury sermons I own show the same collecting impulse. Although I acquired them the way they were printed—as disbound pamphlets—minuscule numbering in the upper right-hand corner shows that they had been gathered together at some point as part of a much larger collection (the first starts with leaf number 182).

[20] Butler's Sermons begin with three 'Upon Human Nature' generally that lay the philosophical foundation for several those following,for example 'Upon Compassion' (no. 5) and 'Upon Self-Deceit' (no. 10). Sherlock's Discourses open with a four-part swingeing attack upon Deistic principles—a theme he returns to again and again. Cf. Twenty Sermons Upon Social Duties and their Opposite Vices, mentioned above.

CHAPTER 4—BUTLER AND SHERLOCK

The literary strength of the eighteenth-century sermon can be demonstrated by examining representative productions of two figures from what I have called the Death Valley of this genre (chapter 1).

The careers of Joseph Butler and Thomas Sherlock show how close they were to the theological and political centre of their time, and their lives furnish interesting parallels and contrasts. Both became bishops, starting, as the custom was, in a poor see and being translated to a more opulent one. Both preached their most famous sermons in London to educated and polite audiences—the majority in both cases being lawyers. Both published sets of sermons chosen from a much larger number delivered in a regular course to the regular congregation in one place, as well as occasional sermons which first appeared individually. The Rolls Chapel, where Butler preached his Fifteen Sermons, was a short walk down Chancery Lane and across Fleet Street from the Temple Church, where Sherlock may have been preaching some of his Several Discourses at the same time.

The differences are as striking as the similarities. Butler was born into the family of a Dissenting tradesman; Sherlock came of clerical stock. Butler was a Whig, and an uninvolved one at that—'he was wafted to his see in a cloud of metaphysics, and remained absorbed in it', said Horace Walpole (qtd. in Bernard xvii)—whereas Sherlock was a Tory, one of the few appointed to the bench under the first two Georges, and deeply involved in politics.[1] Each wrote an apologetical work, but the two are as different as books published within a decade of each other can be.

Up to the twentieth century, Butler's Sermons were overshadowed by the Analogy. Nevertheless, they had a reputation in their own time, with four editions before Butler's death and a number after. When the Analogy's position in college syllabi was subjected to questioning and dismissal in late Victorian times, the Sermons came to be seen as the significant and relevant part of his work. Moral philosophers have recently sponsored a modest revival of interest in Butler, as signified by Terence Penelhum's volume (1985) and the papers edited by Christopher Cunliffe (1992). But there is no comparable interest in Butler as literature; one searches the Cunliffe volume in vain for attention to his rhetoric, his distinctive style, or his remarkable concern for diction, syntax, and modes of expression.

The trajectory of Sherlock's reputation is higher and shorter. He was vastly more popular than Butler in his own time. His Discourses at the Temple (as they are usually known) were collected in four volumes from some fifty years of preaching. Presumably, they were much more expensive than Butler's Sermons; yet a second edition was called for before the latter volumes of the first one had issued from the press. The ESTC shows a fifth edition within 10 years of the initial printing, and a third Dublin edition followed three years later. The vogue continues through the end of the century, then—nothing. The British Museum catalogue does not list a single reprint in the 1800s, except for the publication of his Works in 1830, a blip on the radar screen which was probably owing to the Reform controversy. He seems to have been forgotten except for an occasional moue of distaste at the Tryal, and his works have lain undisturbed since. Thus, both figures are ripe for reconsideration.

Let me anticipate one objection. Why, it may be asked, do you take two figures from the theological and social centre of Anglicanism? Why not one figure from the centre and one from the margins? If literary studies as a whole did turn its attention to eighteenth-century sermons, its interest would focus on the margins.[2] But there are two reasons for my choice. First, I contend that we need to find and plot the centre, so that we can tell where the margins are and see them in relation to each other and to what they are deviating from. Second, a focus on the margins may portray the centre as monolithic and its works as monochromatic, repetitious, and uninteresting. Butler and Sherlock illustrate the variety to be found within orthodoxy. The differences in their way of proclaiming what they agreed upon as essentials are neither insignificant nor boring. They are vehicles for conveying the possibilities to be found in creative agreement.

Joseph Butler is one of those authors whose writings appear to be independent of their lives. He did not serve a literary apprenticeship. Even his teenage letters to Samuel Clarke are not steps towards a mature style; they are Butler, modulated for private correspondence. Although his age was contentious about religion, he did not take part in the controversies that called forth floods of books and pamphlets.[3] His life is void of the embroilments that make Sherlock's biography so fascinating and, occasionally, perplexing. There are few descriptions of his conversation[4] and none of his preaching (Downey 55). Thus, few details of the Boswellian sort survive—Duncan-Jones comments that 'The standard life ... is a remarkable instance of the art of expanding a few grains of fact into a large but unnourishing loaf' (15). But it is not clear that study of the sermons would gain if they did. Eighteenth-century sermons are usually somewhat impersonal, this being one of the options in the medium, but Butler's stand out for their concentration on what goes on in the Human Mind, rather than in his own.

The Fifteen Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel was published in 1726, the year in which Butler resigned his post at the Rolls. Butler took the opportunity offered by a second edition in 1729 to add a preface and make stylistic alterations for clarity and intelligibility. Downey comments:

> Paragraphs were shortened to help the reader distinguish more clearly the main points of the argument. Here and there sentences were altered to read more smoothly or to eliminate ambiguity. In a few places passages were deleted, while whole paragraphs were interpolated in others. Most extensive revision, however, was made to punctuation, where almost every page reveals the author's efforts to inject clarity into his prose. (40)

He and others claim that Thomas Secker helped Butler make these changes. What Secker actually says is: 'In the Winter 1725..6 he published the first Edition of his Sermons. I took much Pains in making his meaning easier to be apprehended... I gave him the like Assistance in the Preface, which he put before the second Edition' (10).[5] The changes in the second edition were Butler's own, and the first edition represents the MSS as altered by Secker. How greatly altered, we do not know; Butler's papers were burnt at his death. It seems reasonable to assume that the changes were not radical. The 'Six Sermons Preached upon Public Occasions' are similar in style, and the voice one hears in the Rolls sermons cannot be mistaken for anyone else's.[6] Butler admits that revision might be helpful, yet the standard set out in the 'Preface' ensures that his written expression will not differ substantially from what he said in the pulpit:

> It is very unallowable for a work of imagination or entertainment not to be of easy comprehension, but may be unavoidable in a work of another kind, where a man is not to form or accommodate, but to state things as he finds them.
>
> It must be acknowledged, that some of the following discourses are very abstruse and difficult; … but I must take leave to add, that those alone are judges, whether or no and how far this is a fault, … who will be at the trouble … to see how far the things here insisted upon, and not other things, might have been put in a plainer manner; which yet I am very far from asserting that they could not.
>
> Confusion and perplexity in writing is indeed without excuse … and it is unpardonable for a man to lay his thoughts before others, when he is conscious that he himself does not know … how the matter before him stands. It is coming abroad in disorder, which he ought to be dissatisfied to find himself in at home. (3)

Butler the speaker would have held himself at fault if he had preached his thoughts without taking the time to know them, their connections, and the order in which they ought to stand; his self-imposed obligation to 'state things as he found them' operated before he got as far as taking a manuscript into the pulpit. The changes J. H. Bernard records in his edition merely make expressions clearer, remove occasions for perplexity, and restate subordinate propositions to make them less open to objection. We cannot say, 'this sounds like the rest of the sermon, and this does not.'

Thus we can base our discussion on what is in print, confident that it does not differ significantly from what Butler delivered. But it is just here that the possibilities inherent in eighteenth-century preaching collide with later sensibilities. Whatever these things are and whatever virtues they may have, we feel that we cannot take them seriously as sermons. Downey is explicit: 'The case against Butler as a preacher can perhaps be summed up best by saying that he lacked the homiletic mind. Proem, climax, peroration, articulated division, illustration, anecdote, repetition, metaphor, simile,--the warp and woof of pulpit oratory—are almost entirely absent from his sermons' (49).[7] In other writers this goes beyond a declaration to an assumption. Duncan-Jones, writing as a philosopher, devotes three pages to observations on Butler's style (30-32), but then seems to forget that his sermons are sermons. Instead, he treats them as a system of ethics, and points out lacunae in the exposition of it,[8] ignoring the warning in Butler's preface that the reader

> is not to look for any particular reason for the choice of the greatest part of these discourses; their being taken from among many others, preached in the same place, through a course of eight years, being in a great measure accidental. Neither is he to expect to find any other connexion between them than that uniformity of thought and design, which will always be found in the writings of the same person, when he writes with simplicity and in earnest. (21)

Duncan-Jones's criticisms may take their warrant from other parts of the 'Preface', in which Butler himself simply extends and develops some of his arguments, as though he were not aware of what medium he had chosen to express them in. Yet this assumption must be tempered by what Butler has already said: 'as the title of sermons gives some right to expect what is plain and of easy comprehension, and as the best auditories are mixed, I shall not set about to justify the propriety of preaching, or under that title publishing, discourses so abstruse as some of these are: neither is it worth while to trouble the reader with the account of my doing either' (4). What Butler stuffs into the 'Preface', when considered in this light, suggests a greater awareness of the genre than is usually supposed. He knows and respects its limits; that is why the stuffing ends up in the preface rather than the sermons themselves.

One limit he singles out for special mention is the fact that 'the best auditories are mixed.' The rest of the paragraph can be interpreted as admitting the charge that Butler did not adapt his mode of address to the capabilities of his audience. It is just as likely—considering his carefulness, it is more likely—that we are not to infer this from his reluctance to 'justify the propriety of [his] preaching'; when he says it is not 'worth while to trouble the reader', he probably means it, i.e. he is passing by this matter for others of more moment.

There is no doubt, either, that his 'auditory', while it may have been 'mixed', was among the 'best'. The Rolls Chapel (since demolished) served 'the lawyers and magistrates of the nearby inns of court' (Downey 41), men who had been trained to follow an involved argument patiently, to sift and weigh evidence, to balance probabilities. Twentieth-century critics imagine that Butler's sermons 'must have seemed intolerably dull and difficult to follow' (Mossner 106), but there is no evidence that they exceeded the attention span or lay outside the circle of interests of their original congregation.[9] We do not know what circumstances led to publication, but the dedication implies that they were published with the approval of the Master of the Rolls. There is evidence in the sermons themselves that Butler is aware of his congregation. It is certain from the 'Six Sermons upon Public Occasions' that he moulded his preaching to the demands of an educated audience on a wide variety of occasions. A sermon on charity schools calls forth historical background for the Elizabethan poor laws (248-49) and some practical thoughts on education for rich and poor (254); one before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, considerations on moral obligations to slaves (209); and so on. However, in preaching regularly over a course of years to the same congregation, and with nothing to predetermine his mode of treating his texts, Butler presumably felt the freedom to reflect on the questions closest to his heart, so long as he did not leave his hearers behind.

Those questions determined what type of sermons he would preach, and what he would make of it. Chapter 3 identified it as ethical/practical. It is commonly assumed that this was the dominant type in the period preceding the Methodist revival. Even so, the audience at the Rolls could not have anticipated quite what they got. Butler passes over familiar ground, explaining and enforcing the general duties imposed on us by Scripture. But his inquiries and explanations take orthodox practice back further, tracing its roots in the nature of Man and the congruence between his nature and the commands and insights of Scripture. This is where his attention is focussed.

From the Rolls collection, I have chosen Sermon VIII, 'On Resentment', to show how this works out in practice, and to exemplify Butler's literary qualities, particularly his rhetorical strategy and his style. I begin with its form.

The simplest model divided the typical eighteenth-century sermon into two parts: an explanation and an application, plus the text on which both were founded. These were the 'main body … to which everything else was either preparation or aftermath' (Lessenich 40). However, sermons could contain as many as seven parts following the text: '1) exordium, 2) explication, 3) proposition, 4) partition, 5) argumentative part, 6) application, and 7) conclusion' (41-49). The exordium was a brief introduction, often 'putting forth a general truth of which the text is taken to furnish a particular instance' (56). The explication unfolded the text's meaning, situating it in its biblical or historical context; in contrast to seventeenth-century sermons, this part usually eschewed surprise and flamboyance, hewing closely to the accepted and obvious meaning of a passage. It too was short. The explication might be omitted if the text was clear, or it might be combined with the exordium. The proposition was a 'short and precise delineation of the subject to be dealt with' (76), usually in the form of an assertion, i.e. of the 'general truth' in the text. The partition, a 'short and precise enumeration of the points of view under which the subject was consecutively treated' (76), followed immediately. This too was usually in the form of assertions. It might list either the parts of the text the preacher was going to discuss or the heads of his discussion. In either case, it served as a road map of the argument. It was not always necessary to keep proposition and partition distinct, if the former could be expressed under the heads of the latter (v. Lessenich 37-77).

The structure of the argument itself was determined by the kind of sermon being preached. It had to follow a logical order; the arguments had to be few, since numerous points were difficult to follow and keep in the memory; and the weightiest ones should come last (107). The application, of course, aimed the proposition and its supporting arguments at the life of the hearers, with the intent of making them better Christians and better people. This was the proper place for emotional appeals; Blair called it 'the Pathetic Part' of oratory (2.380-96). Parts 1 through 5 were designed to convince men's reason; parts 6 and 7 (the conclusion, which was simply the last part of the application or coincided with it), tried to move their passions. They were related to each other as a foundation to its superstructure, and preachers could be criticized for omitting either one.[10]

Sermon VIII shows that Butler was well aware of this structure, but not a slave to it.[11] Paragraph 1 is an exordium, although not an ordinary one, since it states two general truths in order to suggest that there is a contradiction between them, and then indulges in what appears to be a long digression on method. The vestigial explication in paragraph 2 neither explains the text nor sets it in context. Neither is necessary. The text is clear (though troublesome!), and it introduces a series of parallel sections in the Sermon on the Mount. The context is very familiar, and the sections are independently explicable.

Butler omits the proposition, but sets out a partition in paragraph 3. Nothing worried eighteenth-century theorists more than the management of this part, and nothing has proved so annoying to later critics.[12] Butler's management here is subtle and natural. The problem is restated at the beginning of the paragraph, and the partition follows as a way of solving it by tracing its parts up to their source. Hence it is not necessary to number the parts of the discourse.

The following paragraphs, up through number 14, comprise the argument. The partition has divided the subject into three heads (Bernard's marginal numbering is especially helpful). The first head, 'what [resentment] is in itself, as placed in our nature by its Author', is further subdivided into two kinds (p. 4). Butler discusses the first kind in paragraphs 4 and 5, then gives the reasons for its existence (second head) in paragraph 6. He repeats the pattern with the second kind (p. 7-8). Paragraph 9 summarizes the argument so far and elaborates the distinction between the two kinds in the light of the preceding discussion.[13] Paragraphs 10 – 12 deal with the third head. At this point we are ready for the application, but the preacher springs a surprise on us. Paragraph 13 introduces an imaginary questioner, interposing an objection which occupies him through two whole paragraphs. The curt transition to application in paragraph 15 seems to have worried Butler; he added a sentence at the end of paragraph 14 in the second edition to round off the preceding section. The two applications are given in paragraphs 16 and 17, and the last couple of sentences in the latter paragraph may be distinguished as the conclusion. Although they follow from the second application, they extend it into a general exclamation and turn a negative assertion into a positive one.

This account is obvious and unexceptionable, but it does not go far enough. Butler is not a formal innovator. Nevertheless, an attempt to fit him into a strict 'neoclassic' structure obliges one to ignore or explain as untidiness bits which seem to be an integral part of the discourse. 'Untidiness' implies a degree of ineptness--not a useful term for this sermon. The objection, for example, is unanticipated and unexpected, yet it seems germane to the subject and the partition, and—however awkward the transition may be—it lends powerful support to the application.

What is happening is that the pressure the form exerts on Butler—a form tested and proved in front of thousands of audiences—is balanced against a counterpressure exerted by his chief concern: 'the search after truth as the business of [his] life' (326). Not that other preachers were uninterested in truth; but the mode of Butler's search impels him to present its results by testing the elasticity of the form, reshaping it in intentional and conscious ways. Close attention to what Butler is doing will lead to a greater understanding of his homiletical argument, and thus into a sense of eighteenth-century sermons as a responsive rather than restricting medium.

The form Lessenich describes is based on assuming that the sermon is a mode of *assertion*. Compare Butler's method:

> Now the foot upon which inquiries of this kind should be treated is this: to take human nature as it is, and the circumstances in which it is placed as they are; and then consider the correspondence between that nature and those circumstances, or what course of action and behaviour, respecting those circumstances, any particular affection or passion leads us to …upon this to examine how far the nature which He hath given us hath a respect to those circumstances … plainly belongs to us: and such inquiries are in many ways of excellent use. (p. 1)

This sermon is a mode of *inquiry*. The contradiction between the two general truths underlying the text forms the subject which is to be investigated—and it is a problem, not an assertion.[14] (This is why he omits the proposition.) How are God's 'perfect goodness' and that 'general benevolence which is the great law of the whole moral creation' to be reconciled with the existence of principles in human nature which are their 'direct contrary'? This is not all; for orthodox eighteenth-century audiences, resentment as an 'implanted … principle' in the human breast posits a challenge to the supreme revelation of God's goodness and of the law of creation in the person and teaching of Christ. This is a serious and interesting matter.

This paragraph also shows the method by which that inquiry is to be carried out.[15] Butler's explanation of method is not just a digression; it functions as a rhetorical device. In the opening of an oration, the speaker has two tasks: he is to awaken the audience's interest in what he has to say, and he is to establish himself as a trustworthy authority, i.e. someone worth listening to. Butler has accomplished the first by treating the apparent contradiction between resentment and benevolence not as a problem with terms, nor as an exercise in abstract logic, but as a thing anchored in human nature and affecting human attitudes and actions.[16] He accomplishes the second by laying out his mode of reasoning. His congregation must have been familiar with it from his prior sermons. By explaining it in detail, Butler both reminds them of his validated claim to authority—'I understand the process by which I pursue the truth; you have seen me engaged in it before'—and *submits himself to their judgment*. This is an open inquiry; at any point an auditor can ask, 'Are you taking human nature as it is? Are you considering the correspondence between that nature and those particular circumstances in which it is placed?'

Having secured his audience's attention and awakened their interest, Butler's first task is to dispose of the problem found in the text itself, the traditional command to love one's neighbour and hate one's enemy. He does so expeditiously by pointing out its implicit contradiction to the paramount 'gospel we profess.' This frees him to focus on the centre of interest in his subject. It is, first, definition and explication of resentment as an innate passion, i.e. part of the way we were formed by divine creation, and second, explanation of the ways in which it is abused, which means diverted to other ends than those for which it was placed in us.

This takes up paragraphs 4 through 12. They—like the arguments in his other sermons—have been treated simply as philosophy; yet, as in his other sermons, they reveal a complex interplay between a number of dependent factors. There is the philosophical process. The problem has been stated clearly; how can it be worked out? Each definition and distinction illuminates an aspect of it and formulates part of the solution. This is connected with Butler's reliance on the text, which is the explicit or implicit referent for each point in his inquiry. If we are commanded by our Savior to love our enemies, when is resentment allowable? What lawful purposes can it serve? Without the text, there is no sermon, no problem needing a solution. Balanced against the philosophical process is Butler's sense of his pastoral duty. He is responsible for the spiritual welfare of his congregation. If they are to obey the command of the text, they must be shown what the 'malice, hatred and revenge' are which they are to avoid. By showing what resentment is in itself, in what it is innocent, and how these passions pervert it, the sermon urges the duty of introspection upon them and sets up reliable guidelines for it at the same time, thus teaching them to be better Christians. Connected with this are the requirements of the homiletical form. Butler does a remarkable job of making definitions and distinctions which hold up philosophically while serving as recognizable and memorable partitions in the argument. For example, the comparison between 'sudden anger' (p. 5) and 'deliberate anger' is an important one, as Bernard notes, adding, 'perhaps no other writer has worked it out with so much precision as he' (fn. 5, 104). At the same time it advances the homiletical argument; few of Butler's auditors could have made the distinction on their own, yet it is shaped as a valuable tool for examining their behavior.

The whole argument pursues these ends concurrently while never losing sight of the 'mixed' character of its audience. It avoids technical terms without avoiding difficult and subtle points; those points are as clear as Butler can make them without simplifying them unduly or failing to note their limits. In paragraph 12 he rejects further analysis of a point on the ground that it 'would be too minute' and thus not useful to his hearers.

If Butler did not overestimate the capacity of his audience, he did not underestimate it either. As he leads them through his argument, he continually appeals to their common knowledge of human nature.[17] Notice how often he uses 'I suppose' (in the sense of 'it is clear'), or ' it is easy to see', or 'it is plain', and similar phrases. These appeals are buttresses to many of his points. But he goes beyond that. From paragraph 7: 'All this is so much understood by mankind, how little soever it be reflected upon, that a person would be reckoned quite distracted, who should coolly resent an harm, which had not to himself the appearance of injury or wrong'. Here is the familiar appeal, but the inference from it is strikingly out of the ordinary. These paragraphs are filled with this sort of moment; without saying anything dazzling, Butler builds on the common foundation by showing uncommon powers of observation and discrimination, and by using those powers to make uncommon deductions. There are enough points of contact to keep his audience from feeling that they cannot understand him; what he says is also far enough beyond the obvious to keep them alert and attentive. They are offered the solid pleasure of being able to follow his inquiry while experiencing the exhilarating shock of mental stimulation at innumerable points in it. Butler continually elicits the response of 'why, that is right,' without an accompanying 'of course.'

Paragraph 13 introduces a common rhetorical device in sermons, the imaginary objector, but the use Butler makes of it is his own. His use could be called 'anti-rhetorical', but only in a limited and specially-defined way. Perhaps in no other preacher is there such an absence of show, such a desire to avoid the sophistical argumentation often imputed to rhetoric.[18] As paragraph 13 shows, this in itself constitutes a rhetorical position, bringing into relief other features of Butler's discourse, much as the whitewashed walls of an eighteenth-century church highlight the Scripture texts painted on them.

The application in paragraphs 15-17 points up another way in which Butler reshapes the medium to serve his purpose. Eighteenth-century theorists agreed that this part should appeal to the emotions in order to rouse auditors to action, to turn arguments into practice; the alternative was bare 'speculative knowledge' (Scotland qtd. Lessenich 111). Butler, however, believed with the utmost seriousness that as a man 'thinketh in his heart, so is he' (Prov. 23:7). His task is to effect a change in men's thinking, and this will change their actions. Since the whole thrust of this sermon is to deepen our understanding of resentment, and to show that, seen in a true light, it is congruent with the Christian moral order, the 'reflections' in paragraphs 16 and 17 are fitting and conclusive.

Butler's style has been much oftener maligned than praised. He rates only three brief mentions in Frei's book, but one, a short quotation, evokes the gratuitous comment, 'Ironically enough, it was one of his rare well-chosen phrases' (51-52). Downey offers a balanced assessment, but describes his prose in such phrases as 'stolid' (57), and 'rigid and tormented' (49).

Some of his characteristics are usually considered a fault in writers. The sermon is at a uniformly low emotional temperature[19]—so much so that the phrase 'pity ... real pity' in paragraph 10 is almost embarrassing. Figurative language and illustrations are extremely rare—the 'feigned story' (p. 7) seems to be a stretch of the imagination for Butler. Equally rare is vivid diction, so that words like 'coolly' (p. 7) and 'turbulent' are striking in context.[20] But when I first read him, I was taken with his style. Even now, when I can see what ought to be his defects, it makes a deep and abiding impression on me. Why?

Butler's style is in fact not 'rigid'. He is capable of short, straightforward, forceful sentences: 'This was all they had to say, and all they thought needful to be said, upon the subject' (p. 3). 'Resentment is of two kinds: *hasty and sudden*, or *settled and deliberate*' (p. 4). Many of the longer sentences he is notorious for are kept rhythmical and neat by his favorite devices of parallelism and antithesis (Downey 50)—the two may be seen combined in the sentence beginning 'Since therefore' (p. 13). Others look awkward on the page; they reveal their structure and flow only when read aloud, i.e. their structure is more strongly rhetorical than grammatical. Once one learns where to pause—and how long to pause—stresses and rhythms are easily found. Take the sentence from paragraph 1: 'But upon this to examine how far the nature which He hath given us hath a respect to those circumstances, such as they are; how far it leads us to act a proper part in them; plainly belongs to us: and such inquiries are in many ways of excellent use'. The main verb phrase, 'plainly belongs to us', seems like an orphan on the page, and no parentage can be supplied by any amount of punctuation. But read it aloud; make a brief pause after the first three words, and again after 'examine'; read the two 'how far' clauses in the same way; drop the voice for the subordinate clause 'such as they are', with a slight stress on 'they'; then make a longer pause after 'them', and bring the voice up to a strong emphasis on 'plainly belongs to us.' The sentence does not roll off the tongue. It isn't intended to (although the last clause flows smoothly). But the sequence of clauses makes sense, and each one takes its proper place in the hierarchy of tone and stress. In particular, the maligned verb phrase comes into unexpected prominence.

Other sentences have their own characteristic movement, each related to their point, or, more exactly, to their hierarchy of points. Some are what I call 'progressive': A leads on to B leads on to C, in a temporal progression which unfolds the sense for the audience. 'And the evil or harm will appear greater when they feel it, than when they only reflect upon it: so therefore will the injury: and consequently the resentment will be greater' (end p. 7). Others double back with modifying clauses, or spend time in the middle elucidating a difficulty so that the assertions in them are properly understood. 'It is likewise true, that they resent more strongly an injury done, than one which, though designed, was prevented, in cases where the guilt is perhaps the same: the reason however is, not that bare pain or loss raises resentment, but, that it gives a new, and, as I may speak, additional sense of the injury or injustice' (p. 7).

Butler is notorious for such qualifications: 'Hardly any statement is allowed to go unqualified, and often even the qualifications are further amended' (Downey 41-42). Proliferating qualifications in my writing signal intellectual timidity or dishonesty. Not in his. Instead of impeding the flow or diminishing the force of the argument, they define an essential part of his method. If we are 'to take human nature as it is, and the circumstances in which it is placed as they are' (1), we must recognize the bounds of our faculties. By defining his assertions precisely and keeping them within the limits God has placed on our reason and our knowledge, Butler's qualifications free him to concentrate on his inquiry: 'to examine how far the nature which He hath given us hath a respect to those circumstances … [and] how far it leads us to act a proper part in them' (1).

All this adds up to a style in which words mean something; they are not the empty counters they would become in later preaching. Van Dyke's appeal (*supra*, 13) is empty because the words themselves are empty ('all it means to be a man'); they are intended to evoke a vague idea, and their effect depends on their vagueness. Butler's words form significant wholes because each one is significant; and a sentence chosen at random shows itself like a company of crack troops on parade, drawn up in good order, without a superfluous or missing unit:

> And after an injury is done, and there is a necessity that the offender should be brought to justice; the cool consideration of reason, that the security and peace of society requires examples of justice should be made, might indeed be sufficient to procure laws to be

> enacted, and sentence passed: but is it that cool reflection in the injured person, which, for the most part, brings the offender to justice? (p. 14)

I think critics are put off by this almost inhuman concentration on expression. His dispassionate forcefulness can be discomforting. There are limitations on Butler's side also. The restricted ends his prose is made to serve will always debar it from being accorded the highest rank. But if it is not 'great' prose, it is eminently suitable to its object. Butler's sentences are a way of holding together—with the proper degree of tension--a number of seemingly incompatible aspects of a subject. Usually we are forced to express them in a series of sentences with their own verbs and structures, thus losing the sense of their particular connection—the 'thisness' of the way they belong to or modify each other. Butler melds them into a coherent whole. They serve the mode of inquiry into which he refashioned the sermon as no other mode of expression could. In that his style is unique and memorable.

Thomas Sherlock was appointed Master of the Temple on November 28, 1704, succeeding his father William, a well-known controversialist and devotional writer who had procured him the appointment.[21] '[O]f all his appointments, it remained his favorite' (Carpenter 6); 'he greatly enjoyed the society to which it introduced him ... he always preached at [the Temple Church] during term time' (Hughes xix-xx), and he retained the appointment for nearly fifty years, through all the preferments of his career. It is said that the lawyers were prejudiced against him at first (Carpenter 5), but he gained their respect through his preaching ability, and it appears to have been here that his reputation as the foremost homilist of his time was made. There are a number of testimonies to his reputation and influence. 'Mrs Carter ... described his sermons as unequal, but often admirable as answers to the doubts and difficulties of the day. Sometimes, she said, he caught overmuch the spirit of those to whom he preached, and was too clever' (Abbey 2.49 citing Life and Works of Elizabeth Carter 390). Other comments are less equivocal. 'The happiness of mankind is concerned in the preservation of [Sherlock, Secker, and Jortin's] works,' declared Vicesimus Knox in 1779 ('Preaching' 164), and, according to Overton and Relton, 'Thomas Gray ... said that Bishop Sherlock had given some specimens of pulpit excellence which were unparalleled in their kind' (104). His success was not limited to the metropolis. In her autobiography, Eliza Fletcher (born at Oxton, Yorkshire, in 1770), recalls that 'My father's library was upon a small scale—the Spectator, Milton's Works, Shakespeare's Plays, Pope's and Dryden's Poems, Hervey's Meditations, Mrs. Rowe's Letters, Shenstone's Poems, Sherlock's Sermons, with some abridgements of history and geography, filled his little bookshelves' (qtd. in Leavis 147 from Autobiography of Eliza Fletcher 1875).[22] Nor was it limited to his contemporaries; as late as 1814, Jane Austen could write, 'I am very fond of Sherlock's sermons, prefer them to almost any' (278). As the Quarterly Review explained:

> the calm and dispassionate disquisition on some text of Scripture, or the discussion of some theological question, henceforward to be the exclusive object of an English sermon, was carried by Sherlock to a perfection rarely rivalled, unless by Smallridge, nearly his own contemporary, and by Horsley in more recent times. The question is clearly stated and limited; every objection anticipated; and the language is uniformly manly and vigorous. Sherlock, indeed, occasionally breaks out in passages of greater warmth and earnestness ... (qtd. Hughes xx; Carpenter cites it as LVII)

Sherlock resigned the Mastership by a letter of November 5, 1753, at the age of seventy-five, probably as a result of a severe stroke (his second). It was under difficulties brought on by the stroke—he had 'almost lost the total use of his limbs,' and his faculties of speech were much impaired (Hughes lxv; cites 'Dr Nichols's Funeral Sermon', Gentleman's Magazine 1762, 24)--that Sherlock prepared for the press his Several Discourses at the Temple Church. They were published in four volumes between 1754 and 1758. A brief comparison between the first and second editions of Discourse I Part I shows no changes beyond accidentals, and the Hughes edition shows only two or three minor changes in wording (e.g. ''tis' to 'it is') and a modernizing of the punctuation. Thus, although the printing history is confusing, it appears that there are no revisions of the sort one finds in Butler.[23]

The preacher at the Rolls had addressed his lawyers as educated and thinking men, but Sherlock goes far beyond him in addressing his audience as lawyers. His mind had a legal bent,[24] which he improved by study and practice in such posts as Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge—and Master of the Temple. He became 'extremely intimate with the most eminent lawyers of the day, and was universally beloved and esteemed among them' (Hughes xx). When he resigned from the Mastership, he in turn said that 'I esteem my relation to the two societies to have been the greatest happiness of my life, as it introduced me to the acquaintance of some of the greatest men of the age, and afforded me the opportunities of improvement, by living and conversing with gentlemen of a liberal education, and of great learning and experience' (Hughes lxv). Use of law terms and methods was not the only way he adapted his sermons to his congregation; Dudley Ryder wrote in his diary on December 11, 1715: 'Went to the Temple Church. Heard Dr Sherlock. He is a man of excellent sense and his sermons are generally adapted for that particular audience, who being gentlemen of the law and at present many of them inclined to Deism, he generally vindicates the authority and honour of the Scripture and the Gospel' (qtd. in d'Haussy 42). An examination of his occasional discourses delivered elsewhere (Works, vol. 3) shows that this is not merely a case of a preacher happening to find the right congregation; Sherlock was able to adapt his style, his method, and his arguments to a variety of audiences, ranging from charities to the Court.

Consequently, his published sermons span the whole range of kinds set out in chapter 3 above. As Ryder's entry implies, many of the Temple Discourses are Biblical/doctrinal or apologetical; occasionally the two are blended, as in vol. 2.18, where the explication of a verse finds its counterpoint in refutation of the reasoning men use to oppose its doctrine. Discourse 13 in the same volume has a remarkable opening on religious psychology; the body is of the ethical/practical type. The occasional sermons include several of the political and social types, as one would expect in sermons delivered to charities and heads of state. Discourse 12, 'Preached before the Society … for Promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland', is notable in that the first half of it is educational theory. None of these sermons appear to be awkward or 'unequal'; Sherlock is master of, and comfortable with, all types. Nor does he exert the kind of pressure on the sermon form that we find in Butler; if his mind did not run so deep, it had a wider range than Butler's, and he found the sermon form congenial for the investigation and expression of many of its interests. In summary, he was a far more conventional preacher than Butler, and his sermons are standard eighteenth-century fare. Does that make them uninteresting?

Let us look at a typical sermon from the Temple Discourses, vol. 2 number 10, preached on a text from the Gospel reading for the sixth Sunday of Lent (see Appendix B).[25] This is the penitential season of the church year, so the sermon may be expected to focus on some aspect of our need for repentance and its role in our redemption. It begins accordingly; eschewing a separate exordium, Sherlock gives a brief explication of the verse by setting it in its context and--relying on the parallel text in St. Luke—narrating the contrasting choices made by the two thieves. He then breaks into an exclamation on the 'Wisdom of God', which through these two 'Examples', teaches us 'to fear without Despair, and to hope without Presumption' (210). The rest of this paragraph and the following two show the one thief dying in sinfulness despite the proximity of his Saviour, then the other confessing, believing, and dying in a state of grace. Sherlock has gotten two pages into his sermon, and his auditors have already been pulled in several directions. He has kept their attention by scene-painting, figurative language, and a vivid contrast, but has not pronounced a proposition or delivered the heads of his discourse. The exclamation focusses attention on one of God's attributes; then the concentration on the impenitent thief gives us hints of a 'thank God not me' direction. Two paragraphs later he switches directions, but in a way that preserves the sense of what he has said so far--now we know where he's going! And then—the reversal: 'Thus the Case stands with all the Allowances made to it which seem most to favour a Death-bed Repentance: And yet ...' (211). We have been lulled into a false sense of security both in our guess at the argument's direction and in our interpretation of the story in the text--not by Sherlock, but by our own shoddy thinking, the servant of our self-deluding hopes and desires, which will misinterpret or suppress those parts of Scripture that do not fall in with them ('as if the Scripture had said nothing …'). This homiletical shock attack—more shocking because attended by none of the usual signs of oratorical passion[26]—is pressed home by the blunt language in the rest of the paragraph: 'If you are fond of the Example, *Go and do likewise* … If you delay, … you like nothing in the Repentance, but only the Lateness of it … Which Part would you imitate? If both, … you mightily impose on yourself …' (212).

It is clear that for Sherlock, unlike Butler, the sermon is a mode of strong assertion. He is aware of practical unbelief in his audience, but this does not make him defensive—rather, he attacks with zest. This is carried through in the body of his argument. Having announced his partitions in the next paragraph—a calculated drop in emotional temperature—Sherlock makes a series of ascending arguments against hopes for a deathbed repentance. The scheme looks somewhat like this: You place your hope in a deathbed repentance. First, consider the difference in circumstances. There may have been nothing in this like such a repentance. Even if there were, however, conversion to Christianity and the repentance of a Christian are materially different. Further, the sins of a Christian repudiate God's mercy; the sins of the unconverted do not. Second, supposing we get past all that, this example still gives little hope. The man who plans to repent at the last may grow so used to sinning that he cannot change. If that doesn't happen, he always hopes to live a little longer—unlike the thief--and repentance is so much trouble that he'll put it off until it's too late. Again unlike the thief, he may be kept from repenting in his last days by pain, coma, or delirium. Even if he is not, the knowledge of his sins and presumption will make him lose faith in repentance at the last. Then the summary: under all 'the favourable Circumstances … you can imagine', there is no 'Security' in or of a deathbed repentance; for, besides all of these arguments, it goes contrary to God's plan for salvation.

The arguments could be put into a neat outline, but they would lose their effect. Sherlock's strategy is both logical and rhetorical. He does not depend on looking at the story from different points of view, or making a series of observations on it; his arguments are cumulative only to a degree; their power comes from our sense of being forced to abandon one position after another until there is no escape. Each position represents a diminished degree of hope in the power of a final repentance to offset a lifetime of wickedness; by the summing up, that hope is so minute as to be negligible—and the new point made there obliterates it. Thus the first two subpoints under his first main point can offer mutually exclusive explanations of the penitent thief's conversion to show that neither sustains the hopes of the impenitent—each forces the beleaguered mind to retreat from a stronghold.

By laying out the arguments in point form, we would also lose the idea of this sermon as a performance. The sense of a man speaking to an audience, which can become almost tangential in Butler, is central here. Butler lets you listen in as he thinks through things; Sherlock is always talking to you.[27] He uses traditional devices for compelling attention to and interest in his argument: word pictures (210-11), paradox ('What were the Marks of Royalty that were to be discovered on the Cross?' 213), irony ('And are not these hopeful Circumstances for Repentance?' 225), sarcasm ('those who enter upon Sin with … tender Regards to their own Souls, soon grow above such mean thoughts' 219), epigrammatic neatness ('Nor is it in your own Power to sin to what Degree you please' 220), direct address (discussed below), and others. The monologues on 216-17 are a gauge of our sensitivity in interpreting such devices. They are a dramatic 'showing,' an enactment, but of states of mind, not actions. Yet the second would be followed immediately by action; the last words point to it; there is no necessity to say anything more. And Sherlock makes his point by giving the second monologue to God, not the 'dying Christian' (216). *His* 'lamenting' is muffled by being reported rather than quoted, and it is clear that he has no soliloquy because he can have none: 'with what Language will you approach God?' (217)

But it is not a performance for its own sake. Rather, it is like the drama of indictment and prosecution in a law court. In fact, Sherlock constructs the sermon like a lawyer, laying down the principles of the law (210-11), stating the case against the accused (211-12), and mustering arguments and evidence to prove it beyond a reasonable doubt (213-27). This puts his audience in a remarkable position—that of the defendant. It is not unusual for them. In several of the Temple Discourses, Sherlock makes use of a confrontational mode of preaching. Here he continues it right up to the application (227-28).

A practical lesson has been implied all through the sermon. Although the focus is not usually on the penitent thief, his example is clearly the one to be imitated. Thus the easy transition—'What then remains'—and a short application. Here Sherlock exchanges the accusatory mode for a hortatory one. This sermon, like Butler's, serves a number of related ends. As the duty of the lawyer is to explain, preserve, and procure enforcement of the law, so, in his arguments, Sherlock has been explaining and 'vindicat[ing] the authority and honour of the Scripture' and its Author. More prominent is his attempt to educate his audience in their duty to themselves and to God by attacking the 'sin now, repent later' notion—i.e. a false system of practical ethics. What comes to the fore in the conclusion is his pastoral concern for his people—his desire to bring and keep them in the way of salvation. The unusually passionate tone is supported by a catena of scriptural quotations and echoes; by the use of first person plural to bring the preacher into the circle of the judged; by the apostrophe 'who, O Lord, may abide its Coming!';[28] and, most of all, by its subject, the eschaton—sublime and solemn in itself. And this section is the last surprise of the sermon. Law cases usually end with a final judgement. In a sense Sherlock has pronounced one in the preceding paragraph (227), but the emphasis here is all on urging his parishioners to amend their ways and make themselves eligible for 'a new Distribution of Honours and Rewards' (228). Butler's sermon ends with a call to scrutinize one's thinking; Sherlock's, with a plea to change one's life. In a word, it is a moving revelation of what Evangelicals call a 'pastor's heart.'

One notable difference between Butler's and Sherlock's sermons is the latter's use of direct address. There is a continual and intentional interplay between second and third person pronouns. Obviously, this is a way to keep the audience's interest, but it does more than that. The first use of it is fairly innocuous: 'Cast your Eyes on the other side of the Cross' (210) merely brings the spectator into the word-picture. The next use ('If you are fond' and following, 211-12) is part of the shock attack; direct address helps penetrate the reluctance of such people to apply uncomfortable Scriptures to themselves.

Its use in the partition immediately following seems inconsistent. The 'you' in 'you shall die in your Sins' includes only those who hope in a deathbed repentance; in 'I shall … briefly hint to you', it takes in the whole congregation. But it is not; the shift here and in other places is justified by St. Paul's command in I Timothy 5:20, 'Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.' Sherlock then shifts back to third person in pages 213-16 to gain emotional distance for the logical arguments that destroy the sinner's hopes.

The use of direct address in the monologue section (216-17) is interesting, as it coincides with the heightened emotion which turns the conclusion of the first main point into a climax. As before, it drives home his accusation of the impenitent Christian, but there is also a strong sense that the rest of the congregation are interested onlookers, being taught to 'fear without Despair, and to hope without Presumption' (210)—to deal with envy of the profligate and secret desires to imitate them.

Sherlock often uses the second person to create an imaginary dialogue or debate.[29] The strongest instance in this sermon comes in the sentences beginning with 'Do but suppose' (223). One can see the attack being pressed and the escape routes closed by a succession of shorter and more pointed questions. Finally, the sermon ends with direct address, which, in keeping with the rest of the conclusion, rounds things off in a hortatory pastoral mode: 'May they sink into your Hearts, and yield you the Fruits of spiritual Joy and Comfort here, and of Glory and Immortality hereafter!' (228)

At first glance, Sherlock's style appears to have few characteristics of its own, justifying Mitchell's general judgment on eighteenth-century sermons as polished, fluent, and platitudinous

(333). Reading aloud helps (although not as much as with Butler). For example, pages 210-12 seem to lack cohesion on the page; with proper phrasing, stresses, and pauses, the back and forth movement becomes apparent; and the change to direct address (212) has its full effect when spoken. But what is needed more is reading the sermon several times through (which gives roughly the same experience as hearing his sermons week after week); only by this means does the 'race' of his style become noticeable.

I find it hard to characterize the movement and structure of his sentences, perhaps because they come in such great variety—a mark of a conscious orator. The first one in this sermon, e.g., is fairly short, but suspends its sense for more than half its length. The next one is much longer, but the main verb comes at the beginning, and it could end with the last word in the initial clause. It is much more satisfying as Sherlock handles it, with the repetition of 'two' and the variant 'both' introducing amplifying clauses which point forward to the rest of the discourse without anticipating the points of his argument. In general, Sherlock's long sentences are simpler than Butler's. He rarely keeps back the verb, and often opts for a clear forward movement rather than balance and qualification. 'Simpler', however, is not 'simplistic.' The following sentence does make its point by parallelism, balance, chiasmus: 'And the greater his Weakness was, the fitter object of Mercy was he; and because he had not been freed by grace from the Power of Sin, he had the better Plea to be freed by Mercy from Punishment' (215). Compare the sentence beginning 'The Moment you give yourself up to Sin' (220-21). Its forward movement, hindered only momentarily by the series of colons and semicolons, enacts the triumph of 'Sin' over 'Reason', 'Conscience', and (after a slightly longer struggle) 'Religion'; then the trampling of the 'one poor Resolution', finally slowing to a melancholy pace with the loss of 'your last, your only hope.' Different still, despite similar punctuation, is this: 'Once he lived by Violence, in defiance of the Laws of God and Man: When he was penitent, he abhorred and detested his Iniquities: Which Part would you imitate?' (212) The insertion of full stops would convert it into three sentences; but the dramatic effect—similar to the jabbing forefinger of Mr Jaggers—would be lost.

Sherlock has few short sentences, but the rhetorical pauses in many others break them up into smaller units which give the effect of shortness, while preserving a closer connection and continuity than separate sentences would allow. Even phrases of a proverbial terseness ('Why will not Tomorrow serve for Repentance as well as To-day?' 222) are integrated into larger syntactic units. This expansive style has its own drawbacks; the series of questions on 223, though good in its own way, lacks the pungency of Johnson's '[W]hen a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully' (Boswell 2.123).

The most noticeable difference between Butler's style and Sherlock's comes in the first pages of this sermon—the 'word-picture', as I have called it, of the Crucifixion (210-11). Figurative language—e.g. metaphor, simile, personification--is much commoner than in the former author, but it is usually simple, restrained, and just touched upon. There are one or two places in many sermons where a figure is elaborated into something more complex, as here. Like the paragraph quoted in chapter 2, it seems flat and half-realized for those used to the ebullience of Donne. But take a closer look: 'Who would not tremble for himself, when he sees the Man perish in his Sins who died by his Saviour's Side; within reach of that Blood which was poured out for his Redemption, but wanting Faith to stretch out his Hand, and be saved?' (210) Here, obviously, the paramount metaphor is tactile, one of reaching out to touch Christ's blood—yet it is carefully restrained from a grossly or strictly physical sense, as my rephrasing is not. What dominates is an impression of space, i.e. the absence of touch: 'by his Saviour's side', says Sherlock; 'within reach … but wanting Faith to stretch out his Hand ...' (210). Analogous with, and gaining strength from, this idea of the physical and non-physical (what is a gap, anyway?), is the parallel between--or blending of!--the physical and spiritual. Consider the connection between 'Faith' and 'stretching out his Hand'—or, focus on the term 'Blood'. Is this word descriptive of something physical or spiritual? Well, definitely the former—no crucifixion without injury—and yet more definitely the latter—the 'Blood' eighteenth-century Anglicans drank at communion. Sherlock here treats almost two millennia of Christian imagery with a tact that preserves the fruitful ambiguity inherent in it from the beginning.

Consider, again, the last glimpse we have in this section: 'There hangs the Penitent, surrounded with all the Terrors of approaching Death; yet in the midst of all calm and serene' &c. (211). The first clause appeals to the visual sense, yet the 'Terrors of ... Death' puts an appropriate distance between Sherlock's audience and the literal scene; 'calm and serene' and the series of participles carry on the dynamic balance between the literal and the non-literal. It should be clear that the phrase 'word-picture' is not quite adequate for this. Sherlock avoids Sterne's habit of painting fully visualisable scenes, with the result that this extended image is more powerful and fits more appropriately into its context. He is in control of his discourse, and its parts are duly subordinated to the design of the whole.

Part of this section's power is owing to the preacher's reverential and yet imaginative use of Scripture. It is not the only way he uses it; in fact, the sermon is stuffed with Scriptural quotations, allusions, and echoes.[30] In this day of competing translations, we cannot experience the 'instantaneous strong impression' such phrases would have given an eighteenth-century audience (Boswell 1.454). The application (227-28) is especially rich in them, and gives an idea of his range and method. '[S]eek the Lord whilst haply he may be found' is a paraphrase of Isaiah 55:6, 7. '[W]ork for their own Salvation' echoes Philippians 2:12, which contains the further appropriate phrase, 'with fear and trembling.' The phrase 'for the Night cometh, when no man can work' is italicized because it is a direct quotation of St. John 9:4 (the idea of spiritual 'Light' is very prominent in John, and may have suggested this quotation, or vice versa). '[W]ho, O Lord, may abide its Coming!' is a strong allusion to Malachi 3:2, a verse interpreted by Christians as a reference to the Last Judgement, and therefore particularly fitting here. This is followed immediately by 'we must stand before the Judgment-Seat of Christ', quoting Romans 14:10—and another reference to the eschaton, of course. I am uncertain about 'the stoutest Heart will tremble' and 'the Countenance of the proudest Man'; they have a biblical ring, especially the latter, but the closest parallels—Psalm 76:5 and 10:4, respectively—are not very close. 'Words of Soberness and of Truth' is a free quotation of Acts 26:25, in which Paul is defending his proclamation of the gospel before Festus ('Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning hath made thee mad'). The circumstances are similar enough to make the aptness of the quotation striking to anyone who recalls the context. 'Fruits of spiritual Joy and Comfort' is another example of biblical allusions shading off into what one might call 'general associations'. There is no direct source, but the metaphor of spiritual fruit is a well-known New Testament motif, traceable to St John 15. (The closest Scripture for this phrase is Galatians 5:22.) Sherlock ends with 'Glory and Immortality', from Romans 2:7 ('To them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality ...'). The context of this verse yields an exact parallel to what has been inculcated in this sermon, so the phrase makes a peculiarly fitting close.

Now, the foregoing paragraph is a dry piece of source-hunting, but we should not confuse it either with the process of the sermon's composition or the mental activity of Sherlock's audience. He draws on the whole Bible, and the variations between his phrasing and that of the original show that he is relying on his memory, not on a concordance. Similarly, a great part of his hearers would have known many of these phrases and their contexts by heart; at the least, they would have been familiar with the doctrines evoked by them.[31] The process can be broken down into three steps: 1) recognition of the phrase; 2) recall of the source and context; 3) application of the context's content and tone to use of the phrase here. I don't know whether this would have involved a conscious process; perhaps the closest analogue for us is a conference address in which we hear such terms as 'presence', 'binaries', 'subversion', 'abject position', or, for older critics, 'dissociation of sensibility.' We immediately go through a great deal of mental activity that we may not be consciously aware of, yet that activity structures and infuses our response to what is said. Two hundred years from now scholars will engage in labourious source-hunting to reconstruct the 'instantaneous strong impression' such phrases give us.

The other Christian book all his audience would have known well is the Book of Common Prayer. I have found only one direct quotation from it—'Hour of Death' (216) comes from the Litany—but Sherlock shows his indebtedness to it in another way, by his frequent use of what Ian Robinson has called 'doublets' (86). This is defined by C. S. Lewis as 'the coupling together [of] synonymous or nearly synonymous words' (English 217). It is one of the most strongly marked stylistic devices in the Common Prayer.[32] In the Exhortation preceding the General Confession for Morning Prayer we find such examples as 'acknowledge and confess', 'sins and wickedness', 'not dissemble nor cloke', 'goodness and mercy', 'assemble and meet together'—all in the first dozen lines. Sherlock is fond of coupling words or phrases together;[33] one of them usually modifies, develops, or contrasts with the other. Occasionally they are inserted for the sake of parallelism.[34] However, many of them satisfy Lewis's definition and spring from the same motive that he ascribes to Cranmer: 'to adorn [his] style ... To ring the changes' (English 218). I have counted 22 in the 20 pages (10 in Works) of this discourse, including 'hardened and obdurate' (211), 'Pity and Compassion' (215), 'careless and negligent' (223), 'restless and uneasy' (225), 'Pleasures and Enjoyments' (228). Robinson notes that 'this [device] enters into the spirit of a language descended from Anglo-Saxon' (86), so Sherlock may have found it independently, but it is much more likely that he discovered it in the Common Prayer and appropriated it for its associations as well as its 'native genius.' The associations are heightened by the fact that the sermon took its place at the end of a Common Prayer service—probably Morning Prayer or Communion. The imitation of Prayer Book style helps weave service and sermon into a seamless whole.

At the end of his discussion, Lewis says, 'Of all things, the Prayer Book dreads excess. It has almost an Augustan shrinking, not from passion, but from what came to be called enthusiasm' (English 220). This is the negative expression of some of Sherlock's strengths. In him a strongly oratorical sense is combined with a vigorous style and emotional subtlety, all founded on his understanding of homiletics as a branch of practical divinity.[35] Although he made conscious attempts to express and evoke emotions (as Butler did not), those emotions are always under control. The final impression left by Discourse 10 is of seemliness, gravity (despite Sherlock's vaunted 'wit'), and sincerity—'the Words of Soberness and of Truth' (228). His achievement—and it is no small one--is to keep to the middle without mediocrity, and to demonstrate strength without running to extremes.

There are strong similarities between Butler and Sherlock. For example, one could say for Sherlock, as for Butler, that words mean something; both evince an intense awareness of matters of diction, syntax, voice. What I said about [illegible] philosopher's style can be said about the orator's too: if this is not 'great' prose, it is eminently suitable to its object. Both require complex responses from their readers. In both we have to take account of the aims and categories of the sermon, its forms as a spoken and written discourse, and its audience. Yet, as I have shown, we find different things when we read them, and the differences are intentional and fruitful. Butler shapes his discourse in accordance with his use of the homiletic form as a mode of inquiry; Sherlock shapes his as a vehicle for assertion. This leads to differences in organization, style, method, and tone. And in the ends they aim at: Butler compels godly assent; Sherlock, godly fear. They illustrate the variety that is possible within orthodoxy—as St. Augustine is supposed to have said, 'in essentials, unity; in non-essentials, freedom.'

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[1] To this we owe some productions of his pen which have no parallel in Butler's oeuvre—such pamphlets as A Country Clergyman's Plea Against the Quakers' Tithe Bill and A Vindication of the Corporation and Test Acts, which is supposed to have had some influence in detaching the younger Pitt from the cause of reform at the end of the eighteenth century (Clark 341-42).

[2] Laura Stevens's recent article on Sherlock and Woolston is suggestive, treating the Tryal merely as a foil to the more interesting writings and life of its antagonist.

[3] The Analogy may be considered an exception, yet it is so abstract and temperate—Butler scarcely ever names his antagonists, let alone launches personal attacks—that it could be used as a university textbook long after its antagonists were forgotten. V. II.1.2, in which Butler summarizes the arguments of one of the leading Deists, yet never mentions him.

[4] Byrom said he seemed 'somewhat too little vigorous' (Remains 3.97 qtd. in Abbey 2.60). On one occasion, Butler declined to entertain Henry Home, afterward Lord Kames (Bernard xiv).

[5] He appears to have been in demand for this kind of editing work--see, e.g. Secker 27.

[6] Certainly not Secker's, as a brief comparison with his own published sermons would show.

[7] At one point he classifies him as 'primarily a philosopher, not a homilist', as though one must exclude the other.

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[8] E.g. 'Butler gives no analysis of the meaning of "external" and "internal", or of "object", or of the relation between a passion and an object' (48).

[9] When Sherlock is seeking a cast of characters for the Tryal—hardly a legal subject, despite the title—he also chooses 'some gentlemen of the inns of court' (Works 5.152), and represents the subject as arising naturally from their desultory conversation.

[10] V. the bad example of Whitefield in Lessenich 40; cf. Lessenich 110 (fn. 96).

[11] For ease of use, all references are to the paragraph numbers in Bernard's edition. A copy of the sermon is attached as Appendix B. Parenthetical references are distinguished from page numbers by the prefix 'p.'; thus (4) means page 4 and (p. 4) means paragraph 4.

[12] Alkon's entire argument may be summarized as 'partitions, the sermon's ruin.'

[13] Although Butler has not strictly followed the order of the partition, we have no trouble in following his argument and understanding the arrangement of its parts; the intent behind the idea of partition is fulfilled.

[14] Thus far it has much in common with many twentieth-century sermons, and in fact with much twentieth-century theology; it differs in that Butler really believes that there is an answer to his question, and the sermon form is a vehicle for finding the answer—or at least for reproducing (in abbreviated and logical form) the search which found the answer.

[15] For background on key terms in this sermon, see e.g. Brown ('reason', 8-9 in Cunliffe), Cragg ('reason', Reason 120-22), Duncan-Jones ('benevolence', 45-46), Koppel ('benevolence', 40-41), Millar ('resentment'; 296-301 in Cunliffe), and Butler himself ('nature'; sermons 1-3 in the Rolls collection and Dissertation I in the Analogy). For a sharply critical view of this sermon by a philosopher, see Duncan-Jones 145-51.

[16] In addition, if Butler preached sermons I-III before this one, the existence of resentment in the human breast is a serious objection to his whole ethical system.

[17] This relates both to the practical nature of his philosophy (Bernard xviii-xix) and his sense of his pastoral duty. But it can be a dangerous tactic. It is easy to keep ahead of your audience on a subject they know nothing about. It is not so easy when you are preaching on such a well-worn topic as human nature, especially before people who are educated and biblically literate. V. Blair 2.278.

[18] Blair 2.280-81.

[19] If one excepts a slight heightening in the conclusion, signified by the only exclamation point in the entire discourse.

[20] It may be answered that Butler works in chiaroscuro rather than acrylics, so that it is the shades rather than the colours that count.

[21] This appointment, and Sherlock's subsequent rise through the hierarchy, exemplify Barrie-Curien's finding that belonging 'to an ecclesiastical family mattered more' in Church careers 'than to be born in the gentry' (99; cf. 97-100).

[22] There is a slight possibility that this refers to the sermons of the elder Sherlock, republished in 1755. They were not nearly as popular as those of his son.

[23] This is not surprising, in view of his incapacity.

[24] When he had a dispute with the Archbishop of Canterbury over an obscure practice called 'options', he produced a pamphlet of more than 20 pages, surveying the history of the practice and examining its basis in law (Carpenter 163-90).

[25] All references are to the page numbers in Appendix C, which is photocopied from the first edition (1755).

[26] Short declarative sentences, exclamations, &c.

[27] He announces his partition with the unButlerian phrase, 'It would take up too much of your time, to consider' &c. (212).

[28] This device was highly prized by George Herbert: 'Some such irradiations scatteringly in the Sermon, carry great holiness in them' (233-34).

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[29] Especially effective in his apologetical sermons, e.g. vol. 1 number 1, all four parts.
[30] Another way in which it differs from Butler's.
[31] For the degree to which an eighteenth-century author could depend even on his readers' familiarity with e.g. minor exegetical controversies, see Preston on Joseph Andrews (97, 106-08, 114-15).
[32] The Canadian Book of Alternative Services says that some 'believe' it to be 'the essence of his [Cranmer's] style' (12).
[33] E.g. the sentence beginning 'He had his Senses perfect' (224).
[34] 'Helps and Assistances' (214) is the third in a series of doubled nouns.
[35] It would be interesting to make an 'emotional map' of this sermon. Lessenich's simple scheme (38-40, 118-19) calls for calm argument followed by a 'pathetic' conclusion. Sherlock reaches emotional peaks of varying heights earlier (e.g. 210, 216-17, 223).

CONCLUSION

Chapter 2 made a case for putting sermons back on the literary map. It investigated prejudices against the genre, showed how those prejudices combined with the narrowing of the field of literature in the nineteenth century, and then, through the use of contemporary testimony, explored ways in which a less-restrictive view would make room for sermons in the canon. Chapter 3 dealt with three clusters of topics that supply background information scholars need for investigation of the genre. Chapter 4 showed how a literary approach might work by examining representative sermons of Bishops Butler and Sherlock. Together they give an outline of what can be done with the idea of eighteenth-century sermons as literature.

And that is all they do. Making room for a territory on a map is not the same as mapping it. This thesis includes samples of work at different scales in chapters 3 and 4, but what it maps is negligible compared to what has not been explored. There are a number of directions scholars can take.

As I suggest in chapter 2 (48), the readmission of sermons into the literary map calls for a re-evaluation of the subject's other territories as well. The 'institutionalization' of English literature and the establishment of a canon have attracted the attention of scholars, but little work has been done on the narrowing down of genres which makes a neat division between literature and other forms possible.[1] Again, it would be fascinating to study the specific ways in which sermons and other literary genres overlap and interpenetrate during the eighteenth century. What points of contact might there be between Sherlock's section on the Last Judgment and poetry on the same topic (cf. Morris)?

Since sermons touch so many areas beside literature, there are many opportunities for interdisciplinary work as well. They offer an ideal locus at which to study literature's relation to history, sociology, theology, and a number of other fields of knowledge.[2]

The topics in chapter 3 are only a sample. I had no space to touch on the place of the sermon in the liturgy (the connections between them were not merely temporal). Equally important is the physical space in which the sermon was delivered. The books by Clarke and Smith show that eighteenth-century congregations and priests were not merely passive visitors to the sacred spaces they had inherited. They spent time and money repairing, refurnishing, altering, and restoring or reshaping them so that they would be appropriate places for worship. Exploration of this space in relation to the eighteenth-century service and sermon remains to be done. And much more could be done with the topics I chose. My classification scheme should be tested against a much larger part of the corpus. Jacob's Lay Religion in the Eighteenth Century, which came to hand too late for chapter 3, delineates several characteristics of audiences, but from an historical rather than a literary point of view. Questions about the readership for written sermons might lead into investigation of publishing conditions and the reach and influence of sermons in their spoken and written forms.

Much could be done outside the limits I set myself. A survey of this sort should be modified and extended by investigating diversity and change where it assumes or asserts continuity. There are chronological developments. An Atterbury sermon shows a much more elaborate scheme of points and subpoints than one by Butler or Sherlock. Why? What led to simplification, and what can we infer from it? What does it suggest about sermon types, audiences, and orality? In the other direction, we need critical exploration of the changes brought about by Wesley and Whitefield and their followers. What gains and losses were there to the sermon as literature from their innovations in form, style, and delivery? E.g. how does open-air preaching alter the composition and expectations of the audience, and what effects does that have on the sermon's content and form? Do they have a demonstrable influence on the tone and emotional temperature of the novel (cf. 52)? What other areas, usually considered literary, did they influence, and how? What light does this shed on the relations between literature and religion, theology, and social practice in the eighteenth century?

Not all sermons were Anglican, and not all Anglican sermons were orthodox. The different homiletical traditions need to be investigated. What did the differences between Dissent and the Establishment (*supra*, 4) mean for the style and content of sermons, the way they were composed and delivered, and the response to them? What about Roman Catholic sermons? How did the relations between these different traditions change during the course of the century, and how did the changes affect sermons themselves?

What interests me, however, is the centre rather than the margins. Butler and Sherlock show that, in the hands of orthodox preachers, the genre is homogeneous but not monolithic. The limits imposed by orthodoxy did not stifle personal differences and creativity; instead, they granted preachers the freedom to reflect the light of Christian belief through the facets of their own characters, intellects, and predilections.

Butler and Sherlock serve a wider function as an excellent introduction to the whole literary field of eighteenth-century sermons. Their combination of pastoral and literary concerns does not stunt either, but produces discourses that are challenging and invigorating to read. Unmapped territories are usually represented by a blank. Their sermons put interesting and varied features in it which invite further voyages of discovery. I can see the country more clearly now, and I want to go back.

Beyond this, the two of them showed me how engaging an audience linguistically, rhetorically, cognitively, and imaginatively, is to engage them spiritually. In doing so, they address an important concern for me as a scholar, teacher, preacher, and Christian. How can I integrate my understanding of myself, my society, and my God? How can I convey that understanding to others? The answers I hope to reach will owe a lot to them. They, being dead, yet speak.

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[1] I suspect that other genres were excluded at about the same time. Boswell's biography of Johnson is literature; Lockhart's biography of Scott isn't. The difference in intrinsic merit may not be the whole answer.

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[2] Each of these pursuits leads to the threat of 'disciplinary imperialism'—the (fancied) absorption of other fields into literary study. To which it might be replied that everything is a text, everything is subject to literary study. Sermons then become a good test of our notions of literature. What sorts of boundaries do we wish to draw around such an amphibious genre? What function shall they serve? Where do we place them? And how do we decide?

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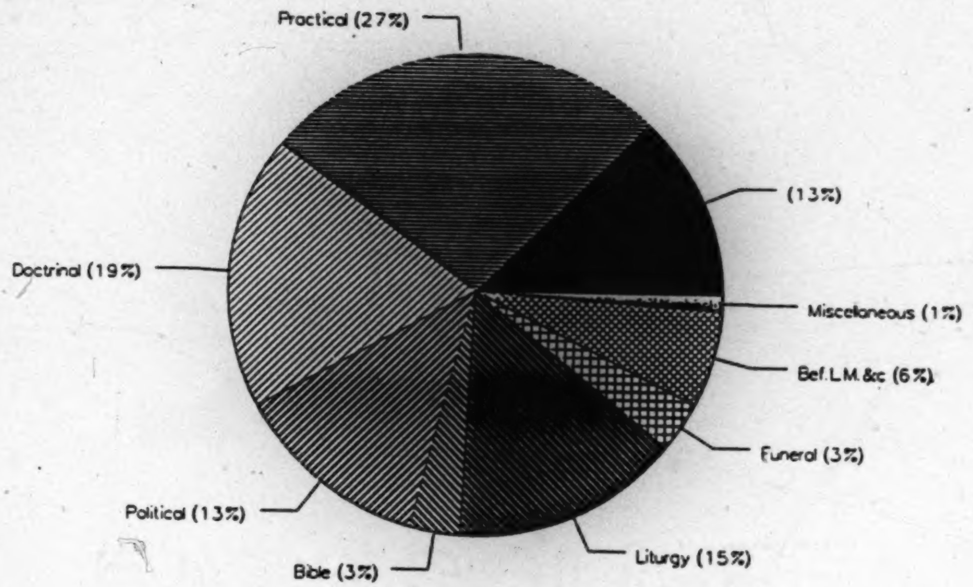
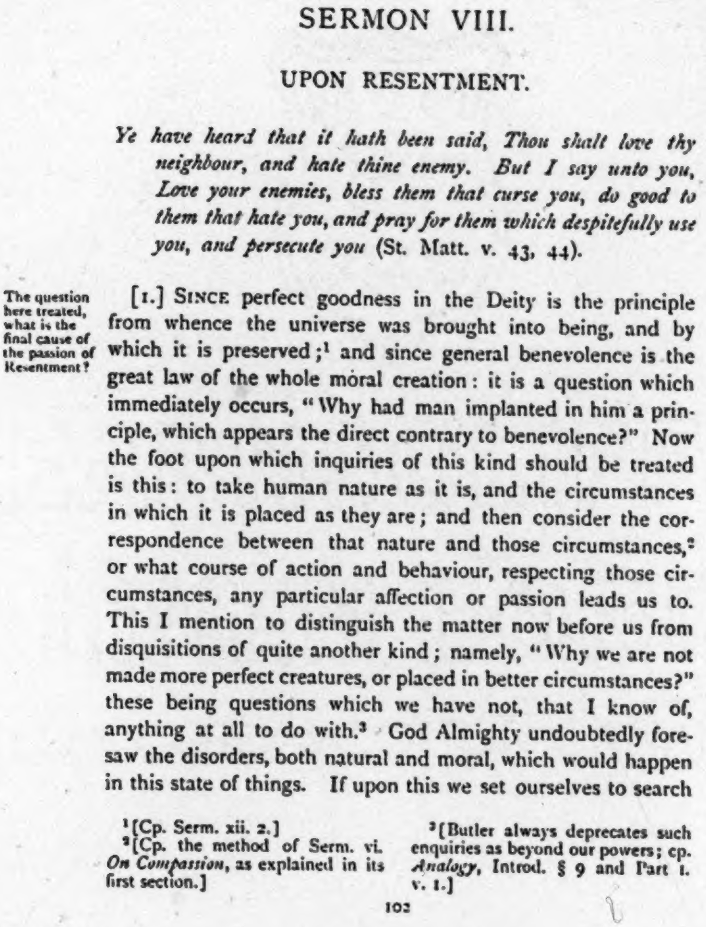
APPENDIX A



Church of England 1688–1753

From Deconinck-Brossard, 'Eighteenth' 110. Enlarged by 25%.

APPENDIX B



SERMON VIII.

UPON RESENTMENT.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you (St. Matt. v. 43, 44).

The question here treated, what is the final cause of the passion of Resentment?

[1.] SINCE perfect goodness in the Deity is the principle from whence the universe was brought into being, and by which it is preserved;[1] and since general benevolence is the great law of the whole moral creation: it is a question which immediately occurs, "Why had man implanted in him a principle, which appears the direct contrary to benevolence?" Now the foot upon which inquiries of this kind should be treated is this: to take human nature as it is, and the circumstances in which it is placed as they are; and then consider the correspondence between that nature and those circumstances,[2] or what course of action and behaviour, respecting those circumstances, any particular affection or passion leads us to. This I mention to distinguish the matter now before us from disquisitions of quite another kind; namely, "Why we are not made more perfect creatures, or placed in better circumstances?" these being questions which we have not, that I know of, anything at all to do with.[3] God Almighty undoubtedly foresaw the disorders, both natural and moral, which would happen in this state of things. If upon this we set ourselves to search

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[1] [Cp. Serm. xii. 2.]

[2] [Cp. the method of Serm. vi. *On Compassion*, as explained in its first section.]

[3] [Butler always deprecates such enquiries as beyond our powers; cp. *Analogy*, Introd. § 9 and Part I. v. 1.]

From Butler, *Works*. Full size.

and examine why He did not prevent them; we shall, I am afraid, be in danger of running into somewhat worse than impertinent curiosity. But upon this to examine how far the nature which He hath given us hath a respect to those circumstances, such as they are; how far it leads us to act a proper part in them; plainly belongs to us: and such inquiries are in many ways of excellent use. Thus the thing to be considered is, not, "Why we were not made of such a nature, and placed in such circumstances, as to have no heed of so harsh and turbulent a passion as resentment": but, taking our nature and condition as being what they are, "Why or for what end such a passion was given us": and this chiefly in order to shew what are the abuses of it.

[2.] The persons who laid down for a rule, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy," made short work with this matter. They did not, it seems, perceive anything to be disapproved in hatred, more than in good-will: and, according to their system of morals, our enemy was the proper natural object of one of these passions, as our neighbour was of the other of them.

The Jewish religion found no difficulty in it.

[3.] This was all they had to say, and all they thought needful to be said, upon the subject. But this cannot be satisfactory; because hatred, malice, and revenge, are directly contrary to the religion we profess, and to the nature and reason of the thing itself. Therefore, since no passion God hath endued us with can be in itself evil; and yet since men frequently indulge a passion in such ways and degrees that at length it becomes quite another thing from what it was originally in our nature; and those vices of malice and revenge in particular take their occasion from the natural passion of resentment: it will be needful to trace this up to its original,
that we may see, what it is in itself, as placed in our nature by I.
its Author; from which it will plainly appear, for what ends it II.
was placed there. And when we know what the passion is in
itself, and the ends of it, we shall easily see, what are the III.
abuses of it, in which malice and revenge consist; and which are so strongly forbidden in the text, by the direct contrary being commanded.

But hatred and revenge are directly contrary (*a*) to Christianity, as well as (*b*) to the reason of the thing.

So we have to consider three questions, viz.:

[4.] Resentment is of two kinds: *hasty and sudden*, or *settled and deliberate*. The former is called anger, and often *passion*; which, though a general word, is frequently appropri-

I. Resentment may be (i) hasty, or (ii) deliberate.

ated and confined to the particular feeling, sudden anger, as distinct from deliberate resentment, malice, and revenge. In all these words is usually implied somewhat vicious; somewhat unreasonable as to the occasion of the passion, or immoderate as to the degree or duration of it.

(i) is not necessarily wrong:

But that the natural passion itself is indifferent, St. Paul has asserted in that precept, "Be ye angry, and sin not":[4] which though it is by no means to be understood as an encouragement to indulge ourselves in anger, the sense being certainly this, "Though ye be angry, sin not"; yet here is evidently a distinction made between anger and sin; between the natural passion, and sinful anger.[5]

it may act like an instinct,

[5.] *Sudden anger*, upon certain occasions, is mere instinct: as merely so, as the disposition to close our eyes upon the apprehension of somewhat falling into them; and no more necessarily implies any degree of reason. I say, *necessarily*: for to be sure *hasty*, as well as *deliberate*, anger may be occasioned by injury or contempt; in which cases reason suggests to our thoughts that injury and contempt, which is the occasion of the passion: but I am speaking of the former only so far as it is to be distinguished from the latter. The only way in which our reason and understanding can raise anger, is by representing to our mind injustice or injury of some kind or other. Now momentary anger is frequently raised, not only without any real, but without any apparent reason; that is, without any appearance of injury, as distinct from hurt or pain. It cannot, I suppose, be thought, that this passion, in infants; in the lower species of animals; and, which is often seen, in men towards them; it cannot, I say, be imagined, that these instances of this passion are the effect of reason: no, they are occasioned by mere sensation and feeling. It is opposition, sudden hurt, violence, which naturally excites the passion; and the real demerit or fault of him who offers that violence, or is the cause of that opposition or hurt, does not, in many cases, so much as come into thought.

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[4] Ephes. iv. 26.

[5] [The important distinction between hasty and deliberate resentment is not original with Butler (as Whewell thought), though perhaps no other writer has worked it out with so much precision as he. In the dissertation *On Virtue* (§ 1) he refers to Hobbes as the author of the remark that the capacity of distinguishing premeditated injury from accidental harm is peculiar to mankind; and Hobbes in his *Leviathan* (Part I. ch. vi.) defines Indignation as "anger for great hurt done to another, when we conceive the same to be done by injury," in contrast with what he describes as "sudden courage." The distinction, indeed, corresponds to that drawn out by grammarians between *θυμός*, a turbulent but transient passion, and *ὀργή*, which represents an abiding and settled purpose (see Trench, *Synonyms of N.T.*, § xxxvii.).

Butler is no friend to the Stoic doctrine of apathy (see Serm. v. § 3 note), and he rejects without qualification the idea that we should be the better were our natural passions extirpated. In this he agrees with the greater Greek teachers; for Plato had laid down (*Legg.* v. 731 b): *θυμοειδῆ μὲν χρὴ πάντα ἄνδρα εἶναι*; and Aristotle in a like spirit had declared: *δεῖ δὲ καὶ ὀργίζεσθαι ἐπί τισι*, *i.e.* "It is a duty to be angry on certain occasions" (*Nic. Eth.* III. i. 24; cp. also II. v. 3). Butler is careful to point out that his doctrine of righteous anger is in literal accordance with the teaching of St. Paul; although he does not mention, as he might have done, that the Biblical conception of the "wrath of God" and the ascription of anger to Christ (*St. Mark*, iii. 5) furnish even a deeper justification for the existence and the exercise of this passion in man. "Anger," says Fuller, "is one of the sinews of the soul; he that wants it hath a maimed mind, and with Jacob sinew-shrunk in the hollow of his thigh, must needs halt. Nor is it good to converse with such as cannot be angry" (*Holy State*, iii. 8). We should not be the worse in these later days, if this robust and manly teaching were more frequently set before us.]

and may be aroused by pain or hurt, as distinct from injustice.

[6.] The reason and end, for which man was made thus liable to this passion, is, that he might be better qualified to prevent, and likewise (or perhaps chiefly) to resist and defeat, sudden force, violence, and opposition, considered merely as such, and without regard to the fault or demerit of him who is the author of them. Yet, since violence may be considered in this other and further view, as implying fault; and since injury, as distinct from harm, may raise sudden anger; sudden anger may likewise accidentally serve to prevent, or remedy, such fault and injury. But, considered as distinct from settled anger, it stands in our nature for self-defence, and not for the administration of justice. There are plainly cases, and in the uncultivated parts of the world, and where regular governments are not formed, they frequently happen, in which there is no time for consideration, and yet to be passive is certain destruction; in which, sudden resistance is the only security.

II. (i) Its final cause is to defend us against sudden violence; it is for self-defence.

[7.] But from this, *deliberate anger or resentment* is essentially distinguished, [as the latter is not naturally excited by, or intended to prevent mere harm without appearance of wrong or injustice. Now,][6] in order to see, as exactly as we can, what is the natural object and occasion of such resentment; let us reflect upon the manner in which we are touched with reading, suppose, a feigned story of baseness and villainy, properly worked up to move our passions. This immediately raises a

I. (ii) Deliberate resentment is directed against premeditated injury; as we may see from an illustration.

[6] [Ed. i. has instead: "both by the occasions which excite it, and by the natural and proper end for which it serves. And," etc.]

indignation, somewhat of a desire that it should be punished.
And though the designed injury be prevented, yet that it was
b designed is sufficient to raise this inward feeling. Suppose
the story true, this inward feeling would be as natural and as
just: and one may venture to affirm, that there is scarce a man
in the world, but would have it upon some occasions. It
seems *in us* plainly connected with a sense of virtue and vice,
c of moral good and evil. Suppose further, we knew both the
person who did and who suffered the injury: neither would
this make any alteration, only that it would probably affect us
more. The indignation raised by cruelty and injustice,[7] and
the desire of having it punished, which persons unconcerned
would feel, is by no means malice. No, it is resentment
against vice and wickedness: it is one of the common bonds,
by which society is held together; a fellow-feeling, which each
individual has in behalf of the whole species, as well as of
himself. And it does not appear that this,[8] generally speak-
d ing, is at all too high amongst mankind. Suppose now
the injury I have been speaking of to be done against ourselves; or those whom we consider as ourselves. It is plain, the way in which we should be affected would be exactly the same in kind: but it would certainly be in a higher degree, and less transient; because a sense of our own happiness and misery is most intimately and always present to us;[9] and from the very constitution of our nature, we cannot but have a greater sensibility to, and be more deeply interested in, what concerns ourselves. And this seems to be the whole of this passion, which is, properly speaking, natural to mankind: namely, a resentment against injury and wickedness in general; and in a higher degree when towards ourselves, in proportion to the greater regard which men naturally have for themselves, than for others. From hence it appears, that it is not natural, but moral evil; it is not suffering, but injury, which raises that anger or resentment, which is of any continuance. The natural object of it is not one, who appears to the suffering person to have been only the innocent occasion of his pain or loss; but one, who has been in a moral sense injurious either to ourselves or others. This is abundantly confirmed by observing what it is which heightens or lessens

which shews that it is heightened or

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[7] [Cp. Serm. i. 7 note.]

[8] [Cp. Serm. ix. 2.]

[9] [Cp. Serm. xi. 20 and xii. 17.]

resentment; namely, the same which aggravates or lessens the fault: friendship, and former obligations, on one hand; or inadvertency, strong temptations, and mistake, on the other. All this is so much understood by mankind, how little soever it be reflected upon, that a person would be reckoned quite distracted, who should coolly resent an harm, which had not to himself the appearance of injury or wrong. Men do indeed resent what is occasioned through carelessness: but then [they expect observance as their due, and so][10] that carelessness is considered as faulty. It is likewise true, that they resent more strongly an injury done, than one which, though designed, was prevented, in cases where the guilt is perhaps the same: the reason however is, not that bare pain or loss raises resentment, but, that it gives a new, and, as I may speak, additional sense of the injury or injustice. According to the natural course of the passions, the degrees of resentment are in proportion, not only to the degree of design and deliberation in the injurious person; but in proportion to this, joined with the degree of the evil designed or premeditated; since this likewise comes in to make the injustice greater or less. And the evil or harm will appear greater when they feel it, than when they only reflect upon it: so therefore will the injury: and consequently the resentment will be greater.

lessened, according to the moral gravity of the fault.

Two apparent exceptions (a) and (b) are only apparent.

[8.] The natural object or occasion of settled resentment then being injury, as distinct from pain or loss; it is easy to see, that to prevent and to remedy such injury, and the miseries arising from it, is the end for which the passion was implanted in man. It is to be considered as a weapon, put into our hands by nature, against injury, injustice, and cruelty: how it may be innocently employed and made use of, shall presently be mentioned.

II. (ii) Thus the final cause of deliberate resentment is to remedy injustice and moral wrong.

[9.] The account which has been now given of this passion is, in brief, that sudden anger is raised by, and was chiefly intended to prevent or remedy, mere harm distinct from injury: but that it *may* be raised by injury, and *may* serve to prevent or to remedy it; and then the occasions and effects of it are the same with the occasions and effects of deliberate anger. But they are essentially distinguished in this, that the latter is never occasioned by harm, distinct from injury; and its natural

Summary of §§ 4-8.

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[10] [Not in Ed. i.]

proper end is to remedy or prevent only that harm, which implies, or is supposed to imply, injury or moral wrong. Every one sees that these observations do not relate to those, who have habitually suppressed the course of their passions and affections, out of regard either to interest or virtue; or who, from habits of vice and folly, have changed their nature. But, I suppose, there can be no doubt but this, now described, is the general course of resentment, considered as a natural passion, neither increased by indulgence, nor corrected by virtue, nor prevailed over by other passions, or particular habits of life.

III. (i) The abuses of hasty resentment are: (a) passion and (b) peevishness, which are the same at root, though expressing themselves differently in different natures.

[10.] As to the abuses of anger, which it is to be observed may be in all different degrees, the first which occurs is what is commonly called *passion*; to which some men are liable, in the same way as others are to the epilepsy, or any sudden particular disorder. This distemper of the mind seizes them upon the least occasion in the world, and perpetually without any real reason at all: and by means of it they are plainly, every day, every waking hour of their lives, liable and in danger of running into the most extravagant outrages. Of a less boisterous, but not of a less[11] innocent kind, is *peevishness*;[12] which I mention with pity, with real pity to the unhappy creatures, who, from their inferior station, or other circumstances and relations, are obliged to be in the way of, and to serve for a supply to it. Both these, for ought that I can see, are one and the same principle: but, as it takes root in minds of different makes, it appears differently, and so is come to be distinguished by different names. That which in a more feeble temper is peevishness, and languidly discharges itself upon everything which comes in its way; the same principle, in a temper of greater force and stronger passions, becomes rage and fury. In one, the humour discharges itself at once; in the other, it is continually discharging. This is the account of *passion* and *peevishness*, as distinct from each other, and appearing in different persons. It is no objection against the truth of it, that they are both to be seen sometimes in one and the same person.

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[11] [So in all the editions: we probably should read "less nocent."]

[12] [A man thus afflicted is described by Aristotle (*Nic. Eth.* IV. v. 9) as πικροί, as opposed to the passionate man, who is ὀργίλος or ἀκρόχολος.]

III. (ii) The abuses of deliberate resentment are: a b c d e

[11.] With respect to deliberate resentment, the chief instances of abuse are: when, from partiality to ourselves, we imagine an injury done us, when there is none: when this partiality represents it to us greater than it really is: when we fall into that extravagant and monstrous kind of resentment, towards one who has innocently been the occasion of evil to us; that is, resentment upon account of pain or inconvenience, without injury; which is the same absurdity, as settled anger at a thing that is inanimate: when the indignation against injury and injustice rises too high, and is beyond proportion to the particular ill action it is exercised upon:[13] or, lastly, when pain or harm of any kind is inflicted merely in consequence of, and to gratify, that resentment, though naturally raised.

One thing always accompanies the abuse of this passion, viz., a determination not to be convinced; this comes partly (a) from pride, and (b) from obstinacy.

[12.] It would be endless to descend into and explain all the peculiarities of perverseness and wayward humour which might be traced up to this passion. But there is one thing, which so generally belongs to and accompanies all excess and abuse of it, as to require being mentioned: a certain determination, and resolute bent of mind, not to be convinced or set right; though it be ever so plain, that there is no reason for the displeasure, that it was raised merely by error or misunderstanding. In this there is doubtless a great mixture of pride; but there is somewhat more, which I cannot otherwise express, than that resentment has taken possession of the temper and of the mind, and will not quit its hold. It would be too minute to inquire whether this be anything more than bare obstinacy: it is sufficient to observe, that it, in a very particular manner and degree, belongs to the abuses of this passion.

Notwithstanding such abuses, deliberate resentment discharges a moral function, by counteracting the weakness of compassion, which would

[13.] But, notwithstanding all these abuses, "Is not just indignation against cruelty and wrong one of the instruments of death, which the Author of our nature hath provided? Are not cruelty, injustice, and wrong, the natural objects of that indignation? Surely then it may one way or other be innocently employed against them." True. Since therefore it is necessary for the very subsistence of the world, that injury, injustice, and cruelty should be punished; and since compassion, which is so natural to mankind, would render that execution of justice exceedingly difficult and uneasy;

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[13] [Persons prone to this abuse are called by Aristotle (*l.c.*) χαλεποί, *i.e.* "cross-grained," a word which suggests also that characteristic obstinacy described by Butler in § 12.]

often hinder the punishment of wrongdoers.

indignation against vice and wickedness is, and may be allowed to be, a balance to that weakness of pity, and also to anything else which would prevent the necessary methods of severity. Those who have never thought upon these subjects, may perhaps not see the weight of this: but let us suppose a person guilty of murder, or any other action of cruelty, and that mankind had naturally no indignation against such wickedness and the authors of it; but that everybody was affected towards such a criminal in the same way as towards an innocent man: compassion, amongst other things, would render the execution of justice exceedingly painful and difficult, and would often quite prevent it. And notwithstanding that the principle of benevolence is denied by some, and is really in a very low degree, that men are in great measure insensible to the happiness of their fellow-creatures; yet they are not insensible to their misery, but are very strongly moved with it: insomuch that there plainly is occasion for that feeling, which is raised by guilt and demerit, as a balance to that of compassion. [Thus much may, I think, justly be allowed to resentment, in the strictest way of moral consideration.][14]

Its good influence upon the world: (1) negative

[14.] The good influence which this passion has in fact upon the affairs of the world, is obvious to every one's notice. Men are plainly restrained from injuring their fellow-creatures by fear of their resentment; and it is very happy that they are so, when they would not be restrained by a principle of virtue.

and

(2) positive.

And after an injury is done, and there is a necessity that the offender should be brought to justice; the cool consideration of reason, that the security and peace of society requires examples of justice should be made, might indeed be sufficient to procure laws to be enacted, and sentence passed: but is it that cool reflection in the injured person, which, for the most part, brings the offender to justice? Or is it not resentment and indignation against the injury and the author of it? I am afraid there is no doubt, which is commonly the case. [This however is to be considered as a good effect, notwithstanding it were much to be wished that men would act from a better principle, reason and cool reflection.][15]

Two reflections:

[15.] The account now given of the passion of resentment, as distinct from all the abuses of it, may suggest to our thoughts the following reflections:

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[14] [Not in Ed. i.]

[15] [Not in Ed. i.]

(1) This passion by itself sufficiently demonstrates the reality of virtue.

[16.] First, That vice is indeed of ill desert, and must finally be punished. Why should men dispute concerning the reality of virtue, and whether it be founded in the nature of things, which yet surely is not matter of question; but why should this, I say, be disputed, when every man carries about him this passion, which affords him demonstration, that the rules of justice and equity are to be the guide of his actions?[16] For every man naturally feels an indignation upon seeing instances of villainy and baseness, and therefore cannot commit the same without being self-condemned.

(2) God is not to be charged with our abuse of passions, which are innocent when used aright.

[17.] Secondly, That we should learn to be cautious, lest we "charge God foolishly,"[17] by ascribing that to Him, or the nature He has given us, which is owing wholly to our own abuse of it. Men may speak of the degeneracy and corruption of the world, according to the experience they have had of it; but human nature, considered as the divine workmanship, should methinks be treated as sacred: for "in the image of God made He man."[18] That passion, from whence men take occasion to run into the dreadful vices of malice and revenge; even that passion, as implanted in our nature by God, is not only innocent, but a generous movement of mind. It is in itself, and in its original, no more than indignation against injury and wickedness: that which is the only deformity in the creation, and the only reasonable object of abhorrence and dislike. How manifold evidence have we of the divine wisdom and goodness, when even pain in the natural world, and the passion we have been now considering in the moral, come out instances of it!

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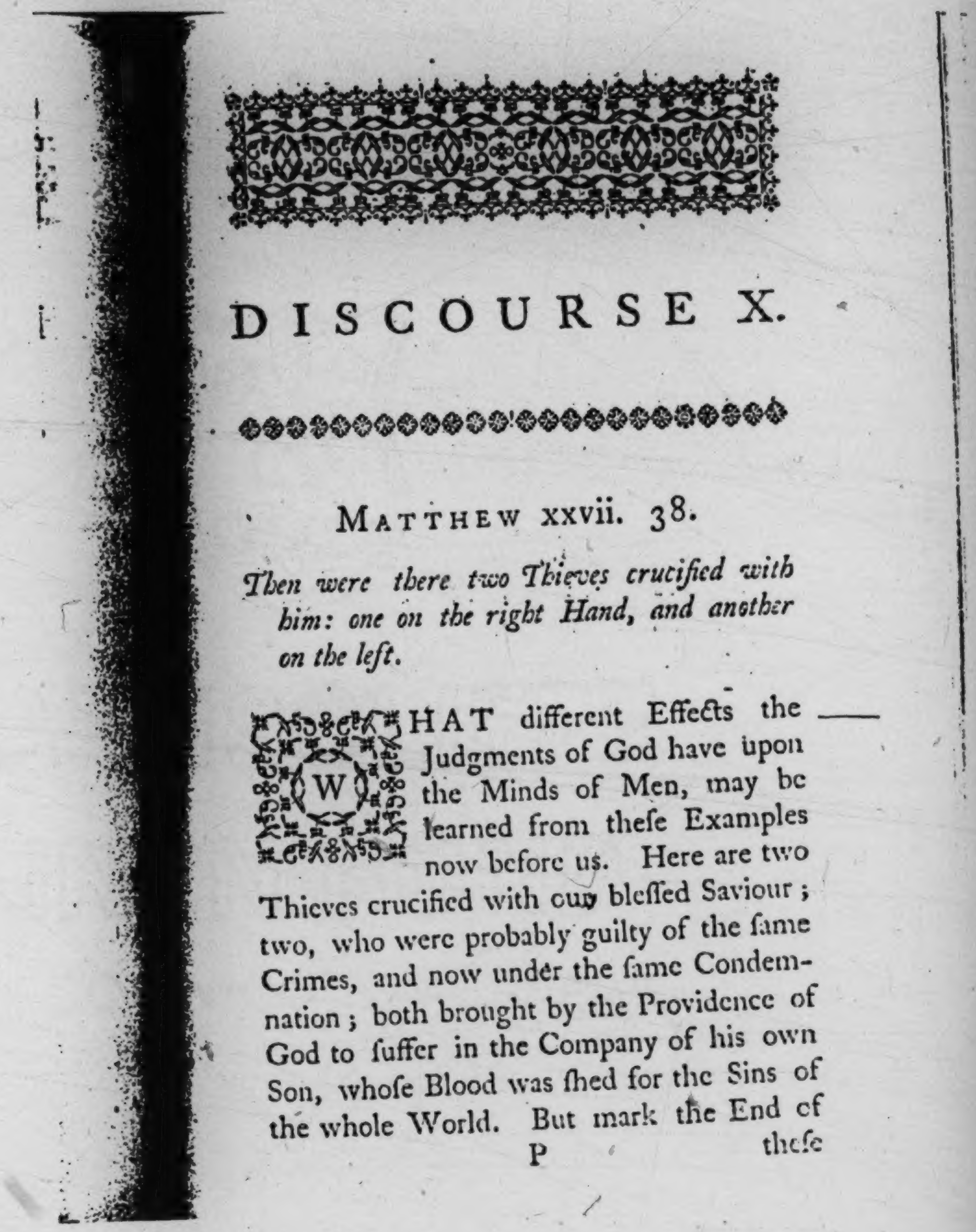
[16] [Shaftesbury had made a somewhat similar observation in his *Moralists* (*Characteristics* ii. 420), a passage in which, after speaking of the absurdity of feeling deliberate resentment for an accidental hurt, he proceeds: "Therefore there is *just* and *unjust*; and belonging to it a natural presumption or anticipation, on which the resentment or anger is founded. For what else should make the wickedest of mankind often prefer the interest of their revenge to all other interests, and even to life itself, except only a sense of wrong, natural to all men, and a desire to prosecute that wrong at any rate?" Butler returns to this proof of the existence of a moral faculty in the dissertation *On Virtue*, § 1.]

[17] [*Job* i. 22.]

[18] [*Gen.* ix. 6.]



DISCOURSE X.

MATTHEW xxvii. 38.

Then were there two Thieves crucified with him: one on the right Hand, and another on the left.

WHAT different Effects the Judgments of God have upon the Minds of Men, may be learned from theſe Examples now before us. Here are two Thieves crucified with our bleſſed Saviour; two, who were probably guilty of the ſame Crimes, and now under the ſame Condemnation; both brought by the Providence of God to ſuffer in the Company of his own Son, whoſe Blood was ſhed for the Sins of the whole World. But mark the End of

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From Sherlock, Discourses, vol. 2. Enlarged by 10%.

theſe Men; One died reproaching and blaſpheming Chriſt, and breathed out his Soul in the Agonies of Guilt and Deſpair; the other ſaw, acknowledged, and openly confeſſed his Redeemer, and expired with the Sound of thoſe bleſſed Words in his Ears, *To Day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradiſe.*

How adorable is the Wiſdom of God, who has thus inſtructed us; and, by ſetting the Examples of his Juſtice and Mercy ſo near together, has taught us to fear without Deſpair, and to hope without Preſumption! Who would not tremble for himſelf, when he ſees the Man periſh in his Sins who died by his Saviour's Side; within reach of that Blood which was poured out for his Redemption, but wanting Faith to ſtretch out his Hand, and be ſaved?

What would the dying Sinner give to have his Saviour ſo near him in his laſt Moments, that he might pour out his Soul before him, and ſeize by Violence the Hand which alone is able to ſave? Yet he who had all theſe Advantages enjoyed none of them; but died in his Sins, void of Hope and of Comfort.

Muſt the Sinner then deſpair, and has God forgot to be merciful? No. Caſt your Eyes on the other Side of the Croſs, and there you

you may ſee the Mercy of God diſplayed in the brighteſt Colours. There hangs the Penitent, ſurrounded with all the Terrors of approaching Death; yet in the midſt of all calm and ſerene, confeſſing his Sins, glorifying the Juſtice of God in his own Puniſhment, rebuking the Blaſphemy of his Companion, juſtifying the Innocence of his Saviour, and adoring him even in the loweſt State of Miſery; and at laſt receiving the certain Promiſe of a bleſſed Immortality.

Thus the Caſe ſtands with all the Allowances made to it which ſeem moſt to favour a Death-bed Repentance: And yet, as if the Scripture had ſaid nothing of the Wretch who died blaſpheming and reproaching Chriſt, nor given us any Cauſe to fear that a wicked Life may end in an hardened and obdurate Death; the Caſe of the Penitent only is drawn into Example, and ſuch Hopes are built on it, as are neither conſiſtent with the Laws of God, nor the Terms of Man's Salvation; for even of this Example the moſt prepoſterous and abſurd Uſe is made. This Penitent, as ſoon as he came to the Knowledge of Chriſt, repented of his Sins: If you are fond of the Example, *Go and do likewiſe:* If you delay, and purſue the Pleaſures of Sin, upon the Encouragement which this Inſtance affords you, it is plain, that you like nothing in the Repentance, but only the Lateneſs of it; and that your Inclinations are to imitate the Thief, rather than the penitent Chriſtian. Once he lived by Violence, in defiance of the Laws of God and Man: When he was penitent, he abhorred and deteſted his Iniquities: Which Part would you imitate? If both, if like him you propoſe to enjoy the Pleaſures of Sin, and like him to repent and enjoy the Pleaſures of Heaven, you mightily impoſe on yourſelf; his Caſe can never be yours, and therefore his Example cannot be your Security. Beſides, were the Caſe indeed parallel to that of the dying Chriſtian, yet ſtill it can afford no certain Hope; ſince the Proof is as ſtrong from the Caſe of the impenitent Thief, that you ſhall die in your Sins; as it can be from the other Caſe, that you ſhall repent of them.

It would take up too much of your time, to conſider this Caſe diſtinctly in all its Views: I ſhall therefore only briefly hint to you the Circumſtances which diſtinguiſh it from that of the dying Chriſtian; and then proceed to ſhew, what little Hope this Example affords, allowing the Caſe to be what it is generally ſuppoſed to be.

Firſt then ; In all this, perhaps, there may be nothing reſembling a Death-bed Repentance. It is no uncommon thing for Malefactors to lie in Priſon a long time, before they are brought to Trial and Execution ; and if that is the preſent Caſe, there is room enough for the Converſion of this Criminal before he came to ſuffer. The Circumſtances incline this Way. How came he to be ſo well acquainted with the Innocence of Chriſt, if he never heard of him till he met him on the Croſs? How came it into his Head to addreſs to him in the manner he does, *Lord, remember me when thou comeſt into thy Kingdom?* What were the Marks of Royalty that were to be diſcovered on the Croſs? What the Signs of Dignity and Power? What could lead him to think that his Fellow-ſufferer had a Title to any Kingdom? what to imagine, that he was Lord of the World that is to come? Theſe Circumſtances make it probable that he had elſewhere learnt the Character and Dignity of Chriſt, and came perſuaded of the Truth of his Miſſion: And what is this to them, who have no Deſire to lie down Chriſtians upon their Death-bed, though they would willingly go off Penitents?

Secondly, Suppoſe this great Work were begun and finiſhed on the Croſs; yet it cannot be drawn into Example by Chriſtian Sinners: Becauſe the Converſion of a Jew or an Heathen is one Thing, and the Repentance of a Chriſtian is another. The Promiſes of God, through Chriſt, are ſo far certain, that whenever an Unbeliever repents and is converted, his Sins ſhall be forgiven. This was the Penitent's Caſe; and therefore the Pardon granted to him anſwers directly to Baptiſmal Regeneration; and has nothing to do with a Death-bed Repentance; nor can at all affect them who have fallen from Grace once received. For,

Thirdly, The profligate Life of this unconverted Sinner was not attended with ſuch aggravating Circumſtances as the Sins of Chriſtians are. He ſinned againſt the Light of Nature, and the common Rules of Reaſon and Morality: But it might at leaſt be ſaid for him, that he was the unhappy Son of an unhappy Father, conceived in the degenerate and corrupted State of Nature; that he wanted both the Senſe and Knowledge, the Hopes and Fears, and the Helps and Aſſiſtances, which the Goſpel affords for deſtroying the Power and Dominion of Sin:

And

And the greater his Weakneſs was, the fitter Object of Mercy was he; and becauſe he had not been freed by Grace from the Power of Sin, he had the better Plea to be freed by Mercy from Puniſhment. But are there the ſame Excuſes, or the ſame Hopes of Pardon, for Chriſtians, who ſin againſt Knowledge, againſt the powerful Motives of Hope and Fear, and in deſpight of the Holy Spirit, with which they were ſealed? To ſin in hopes of Pardon, and upon the Proſpect of future Repentance, is itſelf a great Aggravation of Sin, and a ſad Abuſe of the Mercy of God.

If the Heathen ſins, he ſins under thoſe Infirmities of Nature for which Chriſt died; but the Chriſtian ſins under the Uſe of all the Remedies which the Goſpel has provided, and which were purchaſed for him by his dying Saviour. The Condition of Mankind after the Fall afforded, without doubt, many Arguments of Pity and Compaſſion; and ſuch Arguments as moved the Son of God to undertake their Redemption. The ignorant, the unenlightened Sinner has Right to plead all theſe Arguments in his own Behalf: His is the common Cauſe of Mankind; and Nature with unutterable

Groans, cries for him and all her Children before her great Creator.

If the Penitent received the firſt Knowledge of Chriſt upon the Croſs; yet how much more had he to ſay for himſelf, than the Chriſtian, who comes to make his Peace at the Hour of Death? He might thus plead his unhappy Cauſe: "Lord, I am one of thoſe Sinners, for whom thy Son now expires upon the Croſs; I was conceived in Sin, and brought forth in Iniquity; I have wandered in Ignorance and Darkneſs, without the Light of thy Goſpel to direct me, without the Help of thy Spirit to protect me: Why was all my Life ſo dark, and theſe few laſt Minutes only bleſſed with the Knowledge of thy Son? Lord, accept the poor Remains of Life, ſince it is all I have left to offer: My lateſt Breath ſhall confeſs my own Guilt, and my Saviour's Innocence: And ſince thy Wiſdom has united me to him in this Croſs, let me never more part from him; but as I am joined with him in his Death, ſo let me be likewiſe in his Life for evermore." But what ſhall the dying Chriſtian ſay, after an hardened Life of Sin and Impenitence? What Words ſhall we put in his Mouth to appeaſe the Anger

of

of his injured Redeemer? You may ſpend your Time in lamenting your paſt Folly; but with what Language will you approach to God? You have neither Ignorance nor Weakneſs to plead: you were enlightened with his Word; and his Holy Spirit was ever ready to aſſiſt you, had you been ready to endeavour after Holineſs. What will you then ſay, when frightened and amazed you call for Mercy at your laſt Moments? May not the Lord then ſay, "How long have I waited in vain for theſe Prayers, and theſe Sighs? how have I ſpoken to you by your Conſcience within, and by the Miniſtry of my Word from without; and how have my Calls been deſpiſed? The Gates of Mercy were always open to you, but you ſhut them againſt yourſelf: But tho' you could fly from the Mercy of God, yet his Juſtice will overtake you." Conſider but this calmly with yourſelves, and you will find that the wicked Chriſtian's Caſe is ſo much worſe than the Penitent's upon the Croſs, that there can be no Reaſon for you to encourage yourſelves upon this Example; or to hope for the ſame Mercy, when your Caſe will be greatly different. Theſe are ſuch Circumſtances as enter into the Nature of the Caſe, and will make it always unfit,

and

and oftentimes impoſſible, to be imitated by a Chriſtian. But there are other Circumſtances fit to be obſerved, which render a Death-bed Repentance very inſecure and dangerous, tho' we ſhould allow it all the Hopes which have been raiſed from the Caſe before us.

As, firſt; He that ſins in hopes of repenting at laſt, may ſin ſo far, as to grow hardened and obdurate, and incapable of Repentance when the Time comes. This Reflection is grounded upon the Caſe of the impenitent Thief, who was crucified with our Saviour; who, tho' he had certainly all the outward Advantages which the Penitent had, yet he made no Step towards Repentance, but died reproaching Chriſt, and joining with thoſe who crucified him, in that bitter Jeer, *If thou be the Chriſt, come down from the Croſs*. Or, if you want more Evidence, this Example may be backed by many more in our own Time; it being no uncommon Thing to ſee Malefactors die ſtupid and ſenſeleſs, and go out of the World as wickedly as they have lived in it: And what can this be attributed to, but to the Deſertion of God's Holy Spirit, which will not always ſtrive with Sinners, but ſometimes leaves them to periſh in the Hardneſs of their Hearts?

So

So that the Man who ſins in hopes of repenting, can never be ſure of this laſt Retreat; becauſe by purſuing the firſt part of his Deſign, that is, to enjoy the Pleaſure of Sin, he may ſoon grow incapable of the laſt, which is repenting. I queſtion not but that thoſe who reſerve themſelves to theſe laſt Hopes of repenting, mean ſincerely to do it when the Time comes; for hardly can I think that any Man means to ſuffer for his Sins: but then thoſe who enter upon Sin with theſe tender Regards to their own Souls, ſoon grow above ſuch mean Thoughts, and would ſcorn to own themſelves in the Number of thoſe who are Candidates for Repentance: they contract a Familiarity with Sin, and, with *Solomon*'s Fools, learn to *make a Mock of it*, till by Degrees their Conſciences are hardened, and not to be touched by thoſe ſoft Impreſſions which at the firſt ſetting out they felt from the languiſhing Remains of Grace. And from hence it comes to paſs, that when theſe Sinners lie down upon a ſick Bed, they often want both the Will and the Power to aſk Forgiveneſs; and, by an habitual Neglect of all Parts of Religion, become unable to perform any, even that in which all their poor Hopes are concluded, to repent of, and aſk Pardon for, their

their Sins. Nor is it in your own Power to ſin to what Degree you pleaſe, or to preſerve a Senſe of Religion, amidſt the Pleaſures of Iniquity: If it were, poſſibly the Danger in this Reſpect might be leſs: But Habits grow inſenſibly; there is a kind of Mechaniſm in it, as in the Growth of the Body, and he that gives himſelf up to Sin can no more reſolve how great a Sinner he will be, than he that is born a Man can reſolve how tall, or how ſhort, of Stature he will be. To the Truth of this Experience daily witneſſes: Happy are thoſe who want this fatal Experience! With how much Pain and Uneaſineſs do Men bring themſelves to do the Things, which in a little Time they glory, and take pride in, or at leaſt grow eaſy and contented under? And thus the Man, who with great Tremblings of Heart, and Miſgivings of Mind, brings himſelf to taſte the Pleaſures of Sin, with Reſolutions of an after Repentance, comes at laſt to be ſo well reconciled to his Sins, as not to think Repentance neceſſary for them. The Moment you give yourſelf up to Sin, you give yourſelf out of your own Power; you lay the Chains upon the Neck of Reaſon, and ſet the Paſſions free: Conſcience, which uſed to be your Advance-Guard, and give you early Notice of every approaching Evil, falls into the Power of Luſt and Affection: And when Reaſon and Conſcience are deſtroyed, the triple Cord is broken, and Religion muſt ſoon follow after; and how, in this general Rout, one poor Reſolution, to repent of all this Iniquity, ſhould eſcape, is more than can be eaſily conceived: and yet when you loſe that, you loſe yourſelf; it is your laſt, your only Hope. Upon the whole, there is much more Reaſon to fear, that Sin, if once you indulge it, ſhould get the better of, and deſtroy, your Reſolution of Repentance, than that your Reſolution to repent ſhould ever conquer and deſtroy the confirmed Powers and Habits of Sin. And I wiſh thoſe who have not yet put it out of their own Power to reaſon calmly upon theſe Things, would enter into this Debate with their own Hearts, and conſider what Danger they are in: A few Moments cannot be too much to ſpend in ſo weighty an Affair; and whenever you retire to theſe cool Thoughts, may the Father of Mercies influence thoſe Moments of your Life, upon which all Eternity depends!

But, ſecondly, Could you preſerve your Reſolutions of Repentance, yet ſtill it is not in your own Power to ſecure an Opportunity to to execute them. The Thief upon the Croſs died a violent Death, by the Hand of Juſtice; happy in this at leaſt, that he knew how long he had to live; and had no ground to flatter himſelf with the Hopes of many Years to come. He had no Pretence to defer his Repentance, in Proſpect of a further Opportunity; nor was his Heart to be allured by the ſoft and entertaining Pleaſures of Life, when Life itſelf was ſo near expiring. From the like Death God defend us all! and yet, without it, which of us can hope for ſuch favourable Circumſtances for Repentance? Whenever the Sinner thinks of Repentance, he will find that he has a Work of great Sorrow and Trouble upon his Hands; and this will make him unwilling to ſet about it. No Man is ſo old but that he thinks he may laſt out one Year more: And then, Why will not To-morrow ſerve for Repentance as well as To-day? And thus the great Work is delayed till Sickneſs or natural Infirmities render him incapable of it. It was the Sight of this ſtrange Deluſion in which Men live, ſtill promiſing themſelves longer Life, and upon thoſe Hopes deferring the neceſſary Work of Eternity, which made the Holy Pſalmiſt break forth into that moving

Petition: *So teach us to number our Days, that we may apply our Hearts unto Wiſdom.* The Way that Men generally number their Days, can produce nothing but Folly and Wickedneſs: The many Years to come, which they rejoice in, ſerve only to make them careleſs and negligent, and thoughtleſs of the great Concerns of Immortality: And whether Men are not deluded by theſe Hopes, let any one judge. Do but ſuppoſe that you were in the Thief's Caſe, and certainly to die upon a fixed Day: Do you not think that you ſhould have other Thoughts, other Concerns about you? Could you then delay your Repentance, and ſay, To-morrow will be Time enough? If you would not do it then, why will you do it now? Only for this Reaſon, that you think you have Time enough in Reſerve to do this Work hereafter. And ſo you may continue to think with as much Reaſon, as you do now, till Death, or the Sickneſs which leads to it, ſurprizes you. And hence it comes to paſs that very few, who ſin with Reſolutions of Repentance, ever think of it till they are confined to a ſick Bed; becauſe as long as they are in Health, they have always this Anſwer ready, It will be Time enough hereafter. So that the unfortunate End, to which Juſtice

Juſtice brought this Penitent upon the Croſs, was, with reſpect to his Converſion, an Advantage that few Chriſtians will give themſelves: The Certainty of his Death made his Repentance certain, permitted him no Delays, no vain Excuſes, no flattering Hopes of better Opportunities hereafter.

Thirdly, Conſidering that Chriſtians, who propoſe to themſelves this Example of the Thief upon the Croſs, ſeldom repent till they are warned by Sickneſs to prepare for Death; they will evidently want another Advantage, which this Penitent had. His Death not being the Effect of any bodily Pain, or Diſtemper, but of the Judge's Sentence, he brought with him to the Croſs, which, if you pleaſe, you may call his Death-bed, a ſound Body and Mind. He had his Senſes perfect, his Reaſon freſh and undiſturbed; and was capable of performing ſuch Acts of Faith and Devotion, as were neceſſary to his Repentance and Converſion. But how different often is the Caſe of the ſick and languiſhing Sinner? Perhaps he labours under ſuch acute Pains, as will give him no Reſpite for Thought or Reflection; or perhaps he doſes, and lies ſtupid, without knowing his Friends and Relations, or even himſelf; or perhaps the

Diſ-

Diſtemper ſeizes his Head, and he raves and is diſtracted; loſes his Senſe and Reaſon, and every thing of the Man, but the outward Shape, before his Death. And are not theſe hopeful Circumſtances for Repentance? Is a Man likely to know and find out his Saviour, when he knows not even his own Brother who ſtands by his Bed-ſide? Theſe are very common Circumſtances, and ſuch as render Repentance impracticable. But ſhould the Sinner eſcape all theſe Accidents, and go off gently without being forſaken by his Senſe or Reaſon; yet ſtill it may happen, and often it does, that his promiſed Repentance produces nothing but Horror and Deſpair. In his Life-time he flattered himſelf with unreaſonable Hopes of Mercy, and now he begins to ſee how unreaſonable they were: Now he can think of nothing, but that he is going to appear before his Judge, to receive the juſt Rewards of Wickedneſs: He ſees him already clothed with Wrath and Majeſty; and forms within his own tormented Breaſt the whole Proceſs of the laſt Day. If he ſleeps, he dreams of Judgment and Miſery; and when he wakes, believes his Dreams forebode his Fate. Thus reſtleſs and uneaſy, thus void of Comfort and Hope, without Confidence to aſk Pardon, their Salvation whilſt they have the Light; *for the Night cometh, when no Man can work.* The Night cometh on apace, and brings with it a Change which every Mortal muſt undergo. Then ſhall we be forſaken of all our Pleaſures and Enjoyments, and deſerted by thoſe gay Thoughts which now ſupport our fooliſh Hearts againſt the Fears of Religion. The Time cometh, and who, O Lord, may abide its Coming! when we muſt ſtand before the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt; when the Higheſt and the Loweſt ſhall be placed on the ſame Level, expecting a new Diſtribution of Honours and Rewards. In that Day the ſtouteſt Heart will tremble, and the Countenance of the proudeſt Man will fall in the Preſence of his injured Lord. I ſpeak not to you the Suggeſtion of Superſtition or Fear, but the Words of Soberneſs and of Truth. May they ſink into your Hearts, and yield you the Fruits of ſpiritual Joy and Comfort here, and of Glory and Immortality hereafter!

It cannot be ſuppoſed that God intends to ſave Chriſtians in this Way; which would be at once to evacuate all the Rules and Duties of the Goſpel. Chriſt came to deſtroy Sin and the Works of the Devil; but were Men promiſed Forgiveneſs upon the Account of a few Sighs and Tears at laſt, this would effectually eſtabliſh and confirm the Kingdom of Satan. Tho' God has promiſed Pardon to penitent Sinners, yet his Promiſe muſt be expounded ſo as to be conſiſtent with his Deſign in ſending Chriſt into the World; and then it can never be extended to thoſe, who uſe the Goſpel as a Protection to Wickedneſs, and ſin becauſe God has promiſed to be merciful. In a Word, you have the Promiſes of the Goſpel ſet before you, you have the Mercies of God in Chriſt offered to you; if you will accept them, and do your Part, happy are you: But if you are for finding out new Ways to Salvation, if you ſeek to reconcile the Pleaſures and Profits of Sin with the Hopes of the Goſpel, you do but deceive yourſelves; for *God is not mocked,* nor will he regard thoſe who make ſuch perverſe Uſe of his Mercy.

What then remains, but that all who love their own Souls ſeek the Lord whilſt haply he may be found; and work for without Faith to receive it, does the wretched Sinner expire, and has the Misfortune to ſee his Hopes die before him. In a Word then, put all the favourable Circumſtances together that you can imagine; bring the Sinner by the gentleſt Decays of Nature to his latter End; give him the faireſt and the longeſt Warning; yet ſtill you give him no Security: If he is not ſenſible of his Sin and Impenitence, he will die, like the wicked Thief upon the Croſs, reproaching Chriſt, hardened and obdurate againſt the Thoughts of Judgment: Or if he comes to a Senſe, and ſees his own Unworthineſs, how ſhall he be preſerved from Deſpair, and ſuch a Dread of his righteous Judge, as will make him neither fit to live, nor fit to die? Nothing but an extraordinary Degree of Grace can preſerve him in a Temper fit for Repentance, free on one Side from Confidence and Preſumption, on the other from ſlaviſh Fear which caſts out Love, which may produce Sorrow, but not Repentance. And whether thoſe who have lived under the continual Calls of Grace to Virtue and Holineſs, who have rejected the Counſel of God whilſt they had Health and Strength to ſerve, ſhall be thought worthy of ſuch extraordinary Mercy at laſt, let any reaſonable Man judge.